UPANISHADS

FOR THE LAY READER

BY

C RAJAGOPALACHARI

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

It is confidently hoped that this book will, with the same author's *Bhagavad-Gita,* prove useful to the busy reader who would like the sources of Hinduism made available to him in simple modern language. Even those who are entirely unfamiliar with Sanskrit will find sufficient continuity in English text to give them a comprehensive acquaintance with the Scripture This edition has again been thoroughly revised by the author

INTRODUCTION

In the *Upanishads*, we have a scripture which, among all the holy scriptures of the world displays the most scientific spirit in connection with spiritual enquiry The sages, whose thoughts and teachings we read in the *Upanishads*, seem to be as much inspired by constructive doubt as the most modern men of science Their questions and answers indicate that they lived in an age when, alongside of conformism and the rigid maintenance of old practices, men thirsted for Truth and the atmosphere was charged with the boldest free-thought *Satyamevajayate nanrtam satyenapantha vitato devayanah*

The conformism that prevails in our own midst today, in spite of so much science and free-thought does not confuse us We are familiar with it and we find no difficulty in appraising and evaluating in their true measure both the conflicting elements, orthodox practice as well as the prevailing scepticism But the conformism of some thousands of years ago is a very different thing We understand it much less, if at all, and it, therefore, blurs the picture We may fail for this reason rightly to appreciate the spirit of enquiry which

dominated the mind and lives of the sages whose teachings are recorded in the *Upanishads*, and which is reflected in every line of this great scripture of India

If we learn to make due allowance for the time-interval, and have enlightenment and elasticity of mind enough to be able to use and profit by a holy book with invaluable hoary associations, without having to get the text actually expurgated and revised in order to exclude the irrelevancies and the mere background of a bygone age, we cannot have a better book of religion for modern times than the *Upanishads* The spacious imagination, the majestic sweep of thought and the almost reckless spirit of exploration with which, urged by the compelling thirst for Truth, the *Upanishad* teachers and pupils dig into the Open Secret of the Universe, make this most ancient among the world's holy books still the most modern and most satisfying

It is probable that the *Upanishads* were originally composed somewhat as notes of lectures, intended to assist the pupil's memory in subsequent reflection They were not composed as text-books of philosophy to serve by themselves, as books are now written Notes in our days would be short indicative phrases written to dictation or taken down by the students themselves But, in the old days, they took the shape of verses to be memorized, as writing played a

lesser part in learning than it does now Placed before us today in the shape of printed matter, with title-page, contents and index all complete, the *Upanishads* perplex us in many places with their seeming simplicity of language, covering thoughts that are far from clear Isolated from teacher and without personal expansion and explanation, these compositions confuse us with antithesis and epigram and the use of the same word in varying senses a style which we should have particularly avoided when discussing difficult problems All this is, however, understandable if we remember that they were not books to displace teacher but were notes to standardize teaching and to help memory

Apart from the difficulty arising out of the form, and the difference of purpose of the composition from that of modern books, the distance that divides us from the day when these thoughts were propounded makes the greatest difficulty The reflections were necessarily hung on to the life, beliefs and manners of those ancient times To understand the meaning and the point of what was said by men of a long past age, we have to get back to the circumstances of that age, a task of great difficulty even for the most imaginative among us Beliefs and practices that are to us obviously childish formed the large and main background of life in those days, and the reflections of the best and wisest men of those days,

which necessarily referred to and were set on the background of their own daily life, have to be interpreted by us, eliminating that background What was very real and serious to them is to us childish, untenable and of no consequence, so that even the reflections thereon become un-under-standable The process of seeing a picture apart from the background is not easy We are apt to lose ourselves in the reactions produced in our modern minds by the beliefs and practices referred to, and fail to grasp the essential amidst the distractions of the incidental

In studying the *Upanishads*, we come against repeated references to ceremonials, sacrifices and the worship of gods and discussions as to their efficacy, which confuse the deeper and predominant enquiry The position becomes to the Hindu readers worse still on account of the formal persistence in Hinduism even now of the shell of those beliefs and practices To interpret and evaluate the substance of the *Upanishads*, we need a powerful imagination and an intellectual elasticity that can jump over the tremendous space that divides the beliefs, aspirations and psychologies of modern life from those of a long-past age A study of the full text of the longer *Upanishads* would be the best means of comprehending the mind of the fathers of Hinduism But at the same time, the difficulties pointed out above reach the greatest dimensions in these

longer *Upanishads* In making the selections for the following chapters, an attempt has been made to reduce these difficulties to the minimum without prejudice to the main purpose of presenting an adequate idea of the *Upanishad*-content

KATHOPANISHAD

EVERY Hindu knows the great Kurukshetra scene, which forms the prologue of the *Bhagavad-Gita*—the warrior, stricken by remorse and doubt, throwing himself at the mercy of his divine Charioteer for guidance. The *Katha Upanishad* has an equally sublime introductory scene, forming a noble background for the great teaching imparted in the *Upanishad* itself.

Vajasravasa performed an elaborate sacrifice, which terminated with a parting of all his possessions as gifts to the guests assembled. Vajasravasa's son, Nachiketas, watched the proceedings and, as he saw the gifts being given, he was filled with the thought of the vanity of it all.

"Of what use is it," he said to himself "giving these toothless old cattle and cows past the age of bearing? Should not my father, if he is minded to give what is dear to him, give *me* away?" So he went to his father and said: "Father! To whom are you going to give me?" His father did not pay heed to the question, but went on with the routine of the great sacrifice. Nachiketas repeated the question again and again till Vajasravasa, losing patience, exclaimed with-

out meaning anything like what he said: "You? I shall give you to Yama."

Nothing could be uttered on such a solemn occasion but must be carried out The father was aghast at his own exclamation Nachiketas, however, decided to go to Yama "Many have gone before me any many yet must go after me I go not alone to Death, and what can Yama do to me? Consider what has happened before this, and consider what is going to happen in the future Countless are the mortals that have died before this and will die hereafter The life of mortals, indeed, is like that of the corn which grows and ripens and is reaped, and like the grains that fall which spring again into life"

बहूनामेमि प्रथमो बहूनामेमि मध्यमः ।
किंस्विद्यमस्य कर्तव्यं यन्मयाद्य करिष्यति ॥

(1)-5

अनुपश्य यथा पूर्वे प्रतिपश्य तथाऽपरे ।
सस्यमिव मर्त्यः पच्यते सस्यमिवाजायते पुनः ॥

(1)-6

So Nachiketas went to Yama Yama was not prepared for the voluntary visitor He was not willing to receive anyone before time Nachiketas had to wait for three days before

Yama received him A Brahmana could not thus be disregarded even by Yama So, to make up for the offence, Death offered to Nachiketas whatever boon he might demand He offered many gifts—length of days, and all the possessions of the earth that one could desire, and Swarga thereafter But the youth chose for a boon instruction at Yama's hands about the nature of the soul

"There is no boon that I desire other than this knowledge," said Nachiketas, "and there can be no better instructor than you for imparting this knowledge What use is length of days and what joy can possessions, or song or dance, or horses and chariots give, so long as you are there as an ever-present termination to it all?"

Yama pleaded with Nachiketas

देवैरत्रापि विचिकित्सितं पुरा
न हि सुविज्ञेयमणुरेष धर्मः ।
अन्यं वरं नचिकेतो वृणीष्व
मामोपरोत्सीरति मा सृजैनम् ॥

Even the gods have had doubts in the matter The nature of it is so subtle that it is not possible to comprehend it satisfactorily

Choose some other boon, Nachiketas Do not insist, release me from this

(1)-21

But Nachiketas answered

देवैरत्रापि विचिकित्सितं किल
त्वं च मृत्यो यन्न सुविज्ञेयमात्थ ।
वक्ता चास्य त्वादृगन्यो न लभ्यो
नान्यो वरस्तुल्य एतस्य कश्चित् ॥

If even the gods had doubts in this matter and you say that it is not easily to be comprehended, who then could expound it as you can O Death, and what other boon can equal this? None, indeed

(1)-22

Yama pleaded again

शतायुषः पुत्रपौत्रान्वृणीष्व
बहून्पशून्हस्तिहिरण्यमश्वान् ।
भूमेर्महदायतनं वृणीष्व
स्वयं च जीव शरदो यावदिच्छसि ॥

Ask for sons and grandsons who may live for a hundred years Ask for numerous cows, elephants, and gold and horses Ask for large

tracts of land, and live as many autumns as you desire

(1)-23

एतत्तुल्यं यदि मन्यसे वरं
वृणीष्व वित्तं चिरजीविका च ।
महाभूमौ नचिकेतस्त्वमेधि
कामानां त्वा कामभाजं करोमि ॥

Or choose any boon that you can conceive equal to this, with wealth and long life Be lord of wide dominions, O Nachiketas, I will make you the enjoyer of every desire

(1)-24

ये ये कामा दुर्लभा मर्त्यलोके
सर्वान्कामांश्छन्दतः प्रार्थयस्व ।
इमा रामाः सरथाः सतूर्या
न हीदृशा लम्भनीया मनुष्यैः ।
आभिर्मत्प्रत्ताभिः परिचारयस्व
नचिकेतो मरणं मानुप्राक्षीः ॥

Ask freely for every rare enjoyment in the world of mortals Here are nymphs in chariots playing on lutes, such as men have never seen

These will serve you at my command But, do not ask me about Death

(1)-25

Nachiketas was unmoved He said.

श्वोभावा मर्त्यस्य यदन्तकैत-
त्सर्वेन्द्रियाणां जरयन्ति तेजः ।
अपि सर्वं जीवितमल्पमेव
तवैव वाहास्तव नृत्यगीते ॥

These ephemeral pleasures, O Death, consume the powers of the mortal's senses Even if they lasted all life, they are of little worth You say you give me these gifts, but being all limited by the death of the enjoyer, they remain but yours, though you appear to give them away, these chariots, and song and dance *

(1)-26

न वित्तेन तर्पणीयो मनुष्यो
लप्स्यामहे वित्तमद्राक्ष्म चेत्त्वा ।
जीविष्यामो यावदीशिष्यसि त्वं
वरस्तु मे वरणीय स एव ॥

* Sankaracharya's interpretation of तवैव वाहा etc is simply Keep these ephemeral things for yourself, I do not care for them

How can man be satisfied with wealth? Can we hold wealth when we see you? All wealth disappears on death. We live but as long as you command it to be That boon alone, therefore, is worthy of being desired that I craved of you

(1)-27

Yama thus failed to persuade Nachiketas to give up his inquiry into the mystery of life even for all the pleasures of this world and of the world of the gods "You have displayed courage and resolve," said Yama "There can be no better seeker than such a one, even as you stated that there can be no better instructor than myself Listen, then, and I shall explain"

Then follows the teaching

The first thing that man should learn in the pursuit of Truth is that the good is something different from the pleasant. So Yama begins thus

अन्यच्छ्रेयोऽन्यदुतैव प्रेयस्ते
उभे नानार्थे पुरुषं सिनीतः ।
तयोः श्रेय आददानस्य साधु
भवति हीयतेऽर्थाद्य उ प्रेयो वृणीते ॥

श्रेयश्च प्रेयश्च मनुष्यमेतस्तौ
संपरीत्य विविनक्ति धीरः ।
श्रेयो हि धीरोऽभिप्रेयसो वृणीते
प्रेयो मन्दो योगक्षेमाद्* वृणीते ॥

The Good is one thing, the Pleasant is another These two lead man to very different ends He who chooses the Good attains happiness He who prefers the Pleasant ever loses his object The wise are not deceived by the attractions of the Pleasant They choose the Good Fools are snared into the mere pleasant and perish

(2)-1, 2

अविद्यायामन्तरे वर्तमानाः
स्वयं धीराः पण्डितं मन्यमानाः ।
दन्द्रम्यमाणाः परियन्ति मूढा
अन्धेनैव नीयमाना यथान्धाः ॥

Steeped in ignorance, men engage themselves in activities and pursuits and considering themselves men of understanding and

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* योगक्षेमात् is explained by Sri Sankaracharya to mean "for the sake of the maintenance of the body" It may, perhaps, with a little grammatical licence, be understood to mean "hoping that the source of pleasure may be acquired and preserved"

learned, stagger along aimlessly like blind men led by the blind, going round and round in the cycle of births

(2)-5

The main obstacle in the path of the man striving for the higher life is the identification of oneself with the body. Therefore, all teaching in Hindu Vedanta stresses on man finding his soul within If one realizes the divinity of the eternal spirit within, the battle is won

तं दुर्दर्शं गूढमनुप्रविष्टं
गुहाहितं गह्वरेष्ठ पुराणम् ।
अध्यात्मयोगाधिगमेन देवं
मत्वा धीरो हर्षशोकौ जहाति ॥

Concentrating the mind on the Spirit within, man should realize the divine character of his own soul and its inherent freedom The Spirit lodged within oneself is unperceived because of the perplexities of joy and grief and attachment to worldly objects When one realizes the divine Spirit within himself, all the confusion of joy and grief disappears

(2)-12

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो
न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्य-
स्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूं स्वाम् ॥
नाविरतो दुश्चरितान् नाशान्तो नासमाहितः ।
नाशान्तमानसो वापि प्रज्ञानेनैनमाप्नुयात् ॥

This realization can come only if from inside one's own heart spring purity of resolve and earnestness of spirit It does not come by study or learned discussions It comes to one whose Self yearns for realization, and whose mind has turned away from evil and has learnt to subdue itself and to be at peace with the world

(2)-23, 24

In other words, it comes out of the longing for self-realization that leads to detachment, rather than from much learning, that is to say, it comes out of the grace of the Supreme Spirit that dwells within us

The Self is other than the changing body It is other than the fears and the passions that agitate the mind The Soul is divine in origin It is not altered in nature by the qualities of the mind in which it is embodied It can be released from the

meshes of these qualities by a realization of its own intrinsic divine nature

The reader may note that the following verses are almost identical with the *Gita* verses on the subject, though there is no question here of inducing Nachiketas to take up arms without any compunctions of conscience.

न जायते म्रियते वा विपश्चिन्
नायं कुतश्चिन्न बभूव कश्चित् ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥

You are not born, nor do you die You did not come from anything else, nor were made out of something other than yourself You are unborn, eternal, everlasting and always existed You are not slain, though the body is slain

(2)-18

हन्ता चेन्मन्यते हन्तुं हतश्चेन्मन्यते हतम् ।
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥

If you think you slay some one, or that you will be slain by some one, you are wrong in both cases The Soul neither slays nor is slain

(2)-19

अणोरणीयान्महतो महीया-
नात्मास्य जन्तोर्निहितो गुहायाम् ।
तमक्रतुः पश्यति वीतशोको
धातुः प्रसादान्महिमानमात्मनः ॥

Subtler than the atom, greater than the greatest, the Atman resides in the hearts of living beings He who makes himself desireless and has cast off grief beholds the greatness of the Spirit within him

(2)-20

अशरीरं शरीरेष्वनवस्थेष्ववस्थितम् ।
महान्तं विभुमात्मानं मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥

The man of understanding realizes this ✓bodiless Spirit dwelling in the bodies, this imperishable substance lodged in the perishable and realizing it casts off grief

(2)-21

आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव तु ।
बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च ॥
इन्द्रियाणि हयानाहुर्विषयांस्तेषु गोचरान् ।
आत्मेन्द्रियमनोयुक्तं भोक्तेत्याहुर्मनीषिणः ॥

यस्त्वविज्ञानवान्भवत्ययुक्तेन मनसा सदा ।
तस्येन्द्रियाण्यवश्यानि दुष्टाश्वा इव सारथेः ॥
विज्ञानसारथिर्यस्तु मनःप्रग्रहवान्नरः ।
सोऽध्वनः पारमाप्नोति तद्विष्णोः परमं पदम् ॥

The journey of life can be safely completed, and the Supreme world of Vishnu reached only if one keeps a watchful control over the senses The body is like a chariot to which the senses are yoked like horses The mind is like the reins, which enable the charioteer, viz, the understanding, to hold the horses, i e, the senses, in check The Soul rides on the chariot, and the road is the world of objects over which the senses move If the reins are not held firmly and wisely, the senses, like vicious horses, will get out of control, and the chariot will not reach the goal, but will go round and round in births and re-births If the man is wise, and controls his mind, his senses will be like good horses driven by a good driver

(3)-3, 4, 5, 9

पराञ्चि खानि व्यतृणत्स्वयंभू
स्तस्मात् पराङ्‌ पश्यति नान्तरात्मन् ।
कश्चिद्धीरः प्रत्यगात्मानमैक्षत्
आवृत्तचक्षुरमृतत्वमिच्छन् ॥

पराचः कामाननुयन्ति बालास्ते
मृत्योर्यन्ति विततस्य पाशम् ।
अथ धीरा अमृतत्वं विदित्वा
ध्रुवमध्रुवेष्विह न प्रार्थयन्ते ॥

The self-existant Spirit worked its way out from within and thus the openings of the mind are directed outwards, viz, the sense organs Therefore do men's thoughts ever tend outwards But the few, who have true understanding, turn their mind inwards and realize the Self within Those without understanding, who do not control themselves and pursue external pleasures fall into the wide-spread net of Birth and Death Those of steady mind, realizing what is truly lasting, do not turn their thoughts to transient pleasures

(4)-1, 2

अरण्योर्निहितो जातवेदा
गर्भ इव सुभृतो गर्भिणीभिः ।
दिवेदिव ईड्यो जागृवद्भिर्हविष्मद्भि
र्मनुष्येभिरग्निरेतद्वै तत् ॥
अग्निर्यथैको भुवनं प्रविष्टो
रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव ।
एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा
रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बहिश्च ॥

The sacred fire is well concealed in the wood like a child in the womb of the mother The Soul is contained in the body as the fire is contained and concealed in the wood Fire manifest takes shape in accordance with the thing burning It is now the flame of a lamp, now a furnace and now a forest-fire, according as to where it is manifested The fire by itself is one and the same So also, the Soul though manifold in embodiment, is not the same as that in which it abides for the time being

(4)-8, (5)-9

यदेवेह तदमुत्र यदमुत्र तदन्विह ।
मृत्योः स मृत्युमाप्नोति य इह नानेव पश्यति ॥
मनसैवेदमाप्तव्यं नेह नानास्ति किंचन ।
मृत्योः स मृत्यु गच्छति य इह नानेव पश्यति ॥

What is here is there, and what is there is here, i e, things and beings seem various but are, indeed, one Being We are liberated when we preceive this oneness We go from death to death if we perceive difference It is the mind that by enlightenment can overcome the notion of difference and have a vision of the transcendent Oneness of all

(4)-10, 11

यथोदकं दुर्गे वृष्टं पर्वतेषु विधावति ।
एव धर्मान्पृथक् पश्यंस्तानेवानुविधावति ॥
यथोदक शुद्धे शुद्धमासिक्त तादृगेव भवति ।
एवं मुनेर्विजानत आत्मा भवति गौतम ॥

The rain falling on the hill divides itself and flows down the hill-sides in many torrents The ignorant man sees manifoldness in beings and is confused and he runs after the manifoldness If water is poured into water, it becomes one and the same with it Thus it is with the Self of the man of understanding who sees unity in manifoldness

(4)-14, 15

It is the light of the Spirit within that really enables us to see, not the light that falls from outside Does this Spirit within shine by its own light or does it shine by Another Light? Is it a Self-luminous Soul or is it a reflection of the One lustrous Being? It is on this note of sublime doubt that the fifth *valli* of the *Upanishad* closes The following two verses go together:

तदेतदिति मन्यन्तेऽनिर्देश्यं परमं सुखम् ।
कथ नु तद्विजानीयां किमु भाति विभाति वा ॥

They say that the Indefinable Spirit of Supreme Bliss is this that is within me How can I make out whether this Spirit within me shines by itself or shines by the reflected light from the Universal Spirit?

(5)-14

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं
नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं
तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥

The sun does not furnish the light there, nor the moon, nor the stars, nor these flashes of lightning born of the clouds, certainly not the light of these sacrificial fires The Spirit shines and all things else shine as a result Everything in the universe reflects but that light *

(5)-15

Merely to know is not enough to escape from the tangle of illusion Faith and discipline of

* I crave the forgiveness of the learned for giving an interpretation different from the orthodox commentarians in regard to these two verses My interpretation is based on the juxtaposition of भाति and विभाति

life are necessary The illusion arises not so much from ignorance as from attachments Enlightenment comes with detachment, not with learning This is the main teaching to which all the schools of Hindu Philosophy ultimately revert and on which they lay the greatest emphasis The discipline and mediation that serve to help the Soul to detach itself from the things of the world is what is called *Yoga*

यदा सर्वे प्रभिद्यन्ते हृदयस्येह ग्रन्थयः
अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्येतावद्ध्यनुशासनम् ॥

When the knots of the heart are untied, and man is freed from worldly attachments, he becomes immortal This is the whole of the teaching

(6)-15

The *Antaratman* is lodged in the secret recess of our hearts It is sheathed as the reed-plant is sheathed in its blades We should abstract it with understanding, tearing ourselves from attachments and desires and separating the pure from the gross The Spirit within is pure and is immortal Thus ends Yama's exhortation in this *Upanishad*.

अंगुष्ठमात्र पुरुषोऽन्तरात्मा
सदा जनानां हृदये संनिविष्टः ।
त स्वाच्छरीरात्प्रवृहेन्मुञ्जादिवेषीकां धैर्येण ।
त विद्याच्छुक्रममृतं तं विद्याच्छुक्रममृतमिति ॥

Of the size of a thumb, the Spirit within is lodged in the hearts of men and is there always With understanding, separate Him from the sheaths of the body in which He is lodged, even as you take off the blades of a reed-plant Know that He is immaculate and deathless

(6)-17

ISAVASYOPANISHAD

The *Bhagavad-Gita* presents a synthesis of the highest spiritual effort of the individual with the most practical social co-operation. We should carry on the activities of life, but we should do so remembering that all that we do belongs to God. Work done in this spirit will not cling to us in rebirth. This teaching that is expanded in the *Bhagavad-Gita* is found tersely enunciated in the *Isavasyopanishad* in the first two verses.

ॐ ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किंच जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्य स्विद्धनम् ॥
कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतं समाः ।
एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ॥

Everything in the universe abides in the Supreme being. Realize this well, and, realizing it, cast off the desires that rise in the heart, for example, the thought of possessing what is enjoyed by another. Joy comes only by the giving up of desires and attachments. You may live the longest life, doing work in a detached spirit and dedicating everything to

God. Thus only can we escape the contamination of work and sterilize life

1, 2

The Vedantic teaching about higher knowledge should not confuse us into neglect of duties and indifference about discipline of mind and control of senses To go through the activities of daily life in a spirit of detachment serves as a preparation for the reception of higher knowledge and for self-realization which secures *Moksha.* Indeed, philosophical learning without discipline of conduct is more to be dreaded than even ritualism without the knowledge of *Vedanta* Higher enlightenment is impossible, and even if it were possible, worthless, unless there has been preparation and purification by means of restraint of the senses Fill the span of life given to you, says the *Upanishad*, with work and worship as is done by people without the higher knowledge, but carry on the work in the spirit of detachment and understand the forms in the sense that you have learnt from the higher knowledge. Thereby you shall pass through Death to Immortality

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽविद्यामुपासते ।
ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ विद्यायां रताः ॥

Bhagavad-Gita are almost in the same words as the following *slokas* from *Isavasyopanishad*.

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मन्येवानुपश्यति ।
सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ॥

If one sees all living things as if they were in his own body, i e, feels their joys and sorrows as his own, and sees the same Universal Spirit in all things then there is no need for protecting oneself against others

6

यस्मिन्सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूद्विजानतः ।
तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ॥

When a man understands that all beings are, indeed, the all-pervading Spirit, then he realizes the oneness of all things and illusion and grief vanish

7

The *Isavasyopanishad* emphasises the need for balance In verses which are unfortunately obscure (9, 11, 12, and 14), the importance of both knowledge and discipline, and of attention to matter as well as to spirit is dealt with

The *Upanishad* winds up with a prayer for strength to maintain internal and external purity.

Addressing the morning sun, the aspirant is taught to feel and say, "O Sun, of refulgent glory, I am the same Person as He that is in you". And he is asked to say to himself: "My body will disintegrate but not I and my deeds. O Mind, remember this always, remember this always"

पूषन्नेकर्षे यम सूर्य
प्राजापत्य व्यूह रश्मीन्समूह ।
तेजो यत्ते रूपं कल्याणतमं तत्ते
पश्यामि योऽसावसौ पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि ॥

Oh Sun, who art our Nourisher, Giver of Knowledge, Dispenser of Justice, Giver of Light, Son of the Creator, disperse thy rays, draw in thy light, so that I may be enabled to behold thy most beautiful form I am that same Person as makes thee who thou art

16

As for my body,—

वायुरनिलममृतमथेदं भस्मान्तं शरीरम् ।
ॐ क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर ॥

My body will be reduced to ashes and my breath will join the deathless moving winds Oh Mind, remember thy acts

17

The formula—I am the person that is seen in that refulgent form—occurs slightly modified in *Chhandogya Upanishad* also The insistence is on the realization of the all-inclusive Oneness of the Soul the Universe The Spirit in the Sun is the same as myself! A daily repetition and contemplation of this truth is prescribed as an aid in life to detachment, elevation of Spirit and Self-realization

KENOPANISHAD

WHAT is the Supreme Spirit? By what relation to our experience shall we understand it? This is the subject of enquiry in this *Upanishad* As the *Isavasyopanishad* is known by its first word, so also is this *Upanishad* named after its first word *Kena,* "By whom?"

Neither by the senses nor by human reasoning can we hope to comprehend the nature of *Brahman* This is so because the subject, the object and the means are all identical It is *Brahman* by which the understanding itself functions

यन्मनसा न मनुते येनाहुर्मनो मतम् ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥
यच्चक्षुषा न पश्यति येन चक्षूंषि पश्यति ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥
यच्छ्रोत्रेण न शृणोति येन श्रोत्रमिदं श्रुतम् ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥
यत्प्राणेन न प्राणिति येन प्राणः प्रणीयते ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्व विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥

The Supreme Spirit is that by which the mind thinks, it is not one of the concepts that can be conceived by the mind, but it is that by which, indeed, one is able to think through his mind It is that which enables the eye to see, the ear to hear, the breath to move These functions themselves depend on **Brahman**, and, therefore, are these senses and the mind unable to comprehend the **Brahman**. Do not take this body that one has to feed and look after for the soul.

Life is not the aggregate of the functions of the body but a function of the Highest spirit, inasmuch as not a thought or a breath or a glance is possible without the Supreme Agent

I-5 6, 7, 8

यदि मन्यसे सुवेदेति दभ्रमे-
वापि नूनं त्वं वेत्थ ब्रह्मणो रूपं ।
यदस्य त्वं यदस्य च देवेष्वथ नु
मीमांस्यमेव ते मन्ये विदितम् ॥
यस्यामतं तस्य मतं मतं यस्य न वेद सः ।
अविज्ञातं विजानतां विज्ञातमविज नताम् ॥

NOTE I have interpreted नदे यदिदमुपासते as above on the lines of Sri Ramanujacharya's commentary on the first six chapters of the Gita.

He who thinks that he knows really thereby proves himself ignorant. He who realizes that he cannot know Him has best understood Him. Those who seek to know Him, as they can grasp things of ordinary knowledge, can never achieve their object. Those who realize the limitation of the human mind in respect of the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit and, therefore, frankly confess ignorance, really approach a true understanding of it.

II-1, 3

The limitation of human knowledge, when trying to comprehend the Supreme Being, is brought out in the above epigram.

प्रतिबोधविदितं मतममृतत्वं हि विन्दते ।
आत्मना विन्दते वीर्यं विद्यया विन्दतेऽमृतम् ॥

II-4

Not by reasoning but only by an awakening can we get a vision of the Supreme Spirit. Life, in relation to the Ultimate Reality, is like a state of sleep. Reason, in respect of Ultimate Reality, is like the impossible conception of a sleeping man trying to know what he is about, without waking up. As sleep is to waking, so is ordinary life to the state of Realization.

Self-discipline gives strength of spirit: आत्मना विन्दते वीर्यं To one so strengthened, knowledge gives immortality: विद्यया विन्दतेऽमृतम् ।

The Self is itself immortal, and one has but to know it to become immortal A man dreams that he is suffering from a mortal illness and is dying He suffers pain and even death. But the moment he wakes up, he is cured and regains life So does *Jnana* give immortality to man

The third chapter of this *Upanishad* is an allegory to illustrate that everything rests on the Supreme Spirit It is That which gives heat to Fire, and energy to Motion, and the power of knowing to individual knowledge, however great. All beings are like electric lamps that glow by the power that is received by them from the Supreme Being, themselves not knowing it

The gods were once elated at a great victory, and the *Brahman* appeared before them They could not recognize or understand the vision. Agni, Vayu and Indra were sent to approach and understand Him They went, one by one, and tried to impress on the strange vision their respective powers But when they were challenged to prove their vaunted strength, *Agni* could not burn and *Vayu* could not move by a hair's breadth a dry bit of grass which was placed before them and which they attacked with all their strength one after the other *Indra* went near to see, when

the other two failed, but with his thousand eyes he failed to see anything whatsoever The apparition disappeared altogether from his sight

तेऽग्निमब्रुवञ्जातवेद एतद्विजानीहि
किमेतद्यक्षमिति तथेति ॥

They said to **Agni**, "Oh, Jataveda, go and ascertain who this is, this adorable being" He said "Yes"

III-3

तदभ्यद्रवत्तमभ्यवदत्कोऽसीत्यग्निर्वा
अहमस्मीत्यब्रवीज्जातवेदा वा अहमस्मीति ॥

He ran up to the Being, who asked him "Who are you?" **Agni** answered "I am **Agni**, I am also called Jataveda"

III-4

तस्मिंस्त्वयि किं वीर्यमित्यपीदं
सर्वं दहेयं यदिदं पृथिव्यामिति ।

"And what is your strength?" the being asked "I can burn up all that is here on earth," answered **Agni.**

III-5

तस्मै तृणं निदधावेतद्दहेति
तदुपप्रेयाय सर्वजवेन तन्न शशाक दग्धुं
स तत एव निववृते
नैतदशकं विज्ञातु यदेतद्यक्षमिति ॥

He placed before Agni a bit of dry grass, saying, "Burn this" Going at it with all his energy Agni found that he could not burn it He returned to the gods and said he could not make out who this strange Being was.

III-6

अथ वायुमब्रुवन्वायवेतद्विजानीहि
किमेतद्यक्षमिति तथेति ॥

Then they said to Vayu "Oh, do go, ascertain who this is" And Vayu said "So be it"

III-7

तदभ्यद्रवत्तमभ्यवदत्कोऽसीति वायुर्वा
अहमस्मीत्यब्रवीन्मातरिश्वा वा अहमस्मीति ॥

He ran up to the Being, who asked him· "Who are you?" "I am Vayu, otherwise called Matarisva," answered Vayu

III-8

तस्मिंस्त्वयि क वीर्यमित्यपीदं
सर्वमाददीयँ यदिदं पृथिव्यामिति ॥

Then said the Being "What is your strength?" "Oh, I can sweep away whatever exists on this earth," answered **Vayu**.

III-9

तस्मै तृणं निदधावेतदादत्स्वेति
तदुपप्रेयाय सर्वजवेन तन्न
शशाकादातुं स तत एव निववृते
नैतदशकं विज्ञातुं यदेतद्यक्षमिति ॥

Then the Being placed a withered blade of grass before **Vayu**, and said "Move this" **Vayu** set on it with all his might, but could not move it, and he returned to the gods and said "I could not make out who This is"

III-10

अथेन्द्रमब्रुवन्मघवन्नेत-
द्विजानीहि किमेतद्यक्षमिति
तथेति तदभ्यद्रवत्तस्मात्तिरोदधे ॥

Thereupon, they beseeched Indra to find out who it was He agreed to do so, but when he ran up, he found that the Being had gone out of his view altogether

III-11

SVETASVATAROPANISHAD

THE doctrine of the *Vedanta* is summarized in the following *mantras:*

संयुक्तमेतत्क्षरमक्षरं च
व्यक्ताव्यक्तं भरते विश्वमीश ।
अनीशश्चात्मा बध्यते भोक्तृभावा-
ज्ज्ञात्वा देव मुच्यते सर्वपाशैः ॥

The Lord upholds the Universe, which is a union of the manifest and the unmanifest, the imperishable and the perishable Functioning as Enjoyer through the senses, the Soul in man loses the consciousness of lordship and is enchained When he realizes lordship, he is freed from every tie Let man realize the Divinity of his soul Thereby does he obtain Release

I-8

क्षरं प्रधानममृताक्षरं हरः
क्षरात्मानावीशते देव एकः ।
तस्याभिध्यानाद्योजनात्तत्त्वभावाद्
भूयश्चान्ते विश्वमायानिवृत्ति ॥

Iswara rules over the Soul as well as material nature which forms the field for the Soul's functioning Man reaches liberation from all the illusions of the world by contemplation and repeated meditation until realization is attained of the true nature of these three, God, Matter and Soul

I-10

The fire is not seen when it is concealed in the wood. But it appears to view when the wood burns So does meditation bring out the Supreme Spirit from within us Like oil hidden in the sesame seed, like *ghee* concealed in milk, like water hidden from view in the river-bed, like fire that is contained in the *Arani* (fire-churner), abides the Supreme Spirit within us, though not manifest When the two pieces of wood in the *Arani* are rubbed, the fire manifests itself The butter is separated by churning the milk The water is seen if we sink a pit in the sand of the river-bed The Divine Self, that is hidden within one's self, can similarly be made manifest through the practice of truth, meditation and control of mind and senses, which is penance Make the body the lower piece of the *Arani* and make the Understanding the upper piece, and by the practice of meditation, churn the fire out so to say

वह्नेर्यथा योनिगतस्य मूर्तिर्न
दृश्यते नैव च लिङ्गनाशः ।
स भूय एवेन्धनयोनिगृह्य-
स्तद्वोभयं वै प्रणवेन देहे ॥

Just as fire when it abides in its womb, the woods, is not seen in its manifest form but yet exists and appears to view when the wood burns, even so do both aspects of abiding unmanifest and being drawn out apply to the Spirit in the body. The Pranava can enable the Spirit to be perceived

I-13

स्वदेहमरणिं कृत्वा प्रणवं चोत्तरारणिम् ।
ध्याननिर्मथनाभ्यासात् देवं पश्येन्निगूढवत् ॥

Make your body the nether piece and Pranava the upper piece of the Arani and churn with the practice of meditation. Thus will you be enabled to perceive the concealed Divinity within

I-14

तिलेषु तैलं दधनीव सर्पिराप
स्रोतस्स्वरणीषु चाग्नि

एवमात्मनि गृह्यतेऽसौ
सत्येनैन तपसा योऽनुपश्यति ॥

As oil in the oil-seed, ghee in the curdled milk, and water in the river-bed, so can That be obtained out of the self, through truth and restraint of thought and the senses

I-15

The following verses are addressed as a prayer for enlightenment to the Universal Spirit which is One but takes various shapes with various powers and functions, that will in the end re-unite and be lost in Him,—the Sun, the Moon, the Air, the starry firmament, fire, water, Brahma, the Lord, man and woman, in youth or in tottering old age beast, bird, insect, the dark-blue bee, the green parrot with red eyes, the clouds that shoot forth lightning, the ocean, the seasons,—all will be re-absorbed in Him that has no beginning, the cause of All

य एकोऽवर्णो बहुधा शक्तियोगा-
द्वर्णाननेकान्निहितार्थो दधाति ।
विचैति चान्ते विश्वमादौ स देवः
स नो बुद्ध्या शुभया संयुनक्तु ॥

तदेवाग्निस्तदादित्यस्तद्वायुस्तदु चन्द्रमाः ।
तदेव शुक्रं तद्ब्रह्म तदापस्तत्प्रजापतिः ॥

त्वं स्त्री त्वं पुमानसि
त्वं कुमार उत वा कुमारी ।
त्वं जीर्णो दण्डेन वंचसि
त्वं जातो भवसि विश्वतोमुखः ॥

नीलः पतंगो हरितो लोहिताक्ष-
स्तडिद्गर्भ ऋतवः समुद्राः ।
अनादिमत्त्वं विभुत्वेन वर्तसे
यतो जातानि भुवनानि विश्वा ॥

IV 1-4

एष देवो विश्वकर्मा महात्मा
सदा जनानां हृदये संनिविष्टः ।
हृदा मनीषी मनसाऽभिक्लृप्तो
य एतद्विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥

The Divine Spirit that has forged and brought the Universe into being, the Supreme Soul, ever dwells in the hearts of men He is revealed by the heart and intellect combining and controlling the mind and by meditation They attain deathlessness who thus see Him revealed

IV-17

न संदृशे तिष्ठति रूपमस्य
न चक्षुषा पश्यति कश्चनैनम् ।
हृदा हृदिस्थं मनसा य
एनमेवं विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥

This Isa, dwelling in the heart of man, can be perceived not by the eye but the heart; and he who perceives Him thus by the heart attains immortality

IV-20

Not time or innate quality of matter is the true cause of phenomena, as some learned men imagine, but the glory of God who dwells in and revolves all things, animate and inanimate When one discovers this Universal Spirit within one's self, the misery of life is ended It would be easier to roll up the sky and carry it on one's head as a tanner carries a hide than to achieve happiness without realizing the immanence of God

स्वभावमेके कवयो वदन्ति
कालं तथान्ये परिमुह्यमानाः ।
देवस्यैष महिमा तु लोके
येनेदं भ्राम्यते ब्रह्मचक्रम् ॥

Some learned men attribute the phenomena of the universe to the innate nature of

things, other deluded persons say that time is the cause But it is the glory of God by which alone the wheel revolves and this world goes on

VI-1

यदा चर्मवदाकाशं वेष्टयिष्यन्ति मानवाः ।
तदा देवमविज्ञाय दुःखस्यान्तो भविष्यति ॥

When (men could roll up the sky like a hide,) we could reach the end of pain and grief without realizing God who abides in all things

VI-20

एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः
सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ।
कर्माध्यक्षः सर्वभूताधिवासः
साक्षी चेता केवलो निर्गुणश्च ॥

God, who is concealed in all beings, is one. He pervades everything He is the inner soul of every being and the overseer of all activity He dwells in all forms of life He is the eternal witness, the Conscious Being within, standing apart from that in which He abides and unqualified

VI-11

निष्कलं निष्क्रियं शान्तं निरवद्यं निरंजनम् ।
अमृतस्य परं सेतुं दग्धेन्धनमिवानलम् ॥

Without parts, action-less, tranquil, uncontaminable, spotless, the bridge that transcends and leads to immortality, consuming and unquenchable like fire

VI-19

The direct teaching of a father or a *Guru* is essential Without this, book-knowledge would be of no great avail But more important than all is the previous purging of character and restraint of mind and senses, which are necessary for the knowledge and realization of the highest truth Otherwise, knowledge leads to harm, not to good "I am God" would lead to arrogance and atheism without purity of character, restraint and humility and the personal guidance of father or revered teacher. Hence the following prohibition which should not be understood in any sense other than the caution above indicated·

वेदान्ते परमं गुह्यं पुराकल्पे प्रचोदितम् ।
नाप्रशान्ताय दातव्यम् नापुत्रायाशिष्याय वा पुनः ॥

VI-22

TAITTIRIYOPANISHAD

WE have in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, (First *Valli*, eleventh *Anuvaka*) a valedictory exhortation which reveals to us something of the system of education that produced the cultured among the ancient inhabitants of this sacred land

वेदमनूच्याचार्योऽन्तेवासिनमनुशास्ति । सत्यं वद । धर्मं चर । स्वाध्यायान्मा प्रमदः । आचार्याय प्रियं धनमाहृत्य प्रजातन्तु मा व्यवच्छेत्सीः । सत्यान्न प्रमदितव्यम् । धर्मान्न प्रमदितव्यं । कुशलान्न प्रमदितव्यम् । भूत्यै न प्रमदितव्यम् । स्वाध्यायप्रवचनाभ्या न प्रगदितव्यम् ॥ १ ॥

After having taught the **Vedas**, the teacher instructs the pupil thus Speak what is true Do your duties Continue, without neglect, the daily study of the **Veda**. Now that you have come to the end of your stay with your teacher, marry and bring forth progeny Do not swerve from Truth and **Dharma**, and do something useful in the social economy Achieve greatness, and do not fail to refresh your memory in respect of what you have learnt

देवपितृकार्याभ्याम् न प्रमदितव्यम् । मातृदेवो भव । पितृदेवो भव । आचार्यदेवो भव । अतिथिदेवो भव । यान्यनवद्यानि कर्माणि, तानि सेवितव्यानि, नो इतराणि । यान्यस्माकं सुचरितानि, तानि त्वयोपास्यानि नो इतराणि ॥ ये के चास्मच्छ्रेयांसो ब्राह्मणाः, तेषां त्वयाऽऽसनेन प्रश्वसितव्यं ॥

Remember the gods and your ancestors Honour your mother Look upon her as God Honour your father Look upon him as God Honour your teacher as God Honour your guest Look upon him as if God came to receive your attention May you ever exercise your understanding and, distinguishing the good from the blame-worthy, avoid the latter and ever do what is good Follow all that was good in your teacher's life, not any other You will meet with better men than even the teachers with whom you have lived Show them due respect

श्रद्धया देयम् । अश्रद्धयाऽदेयम् । श्रिया देयम् । ह्रिया देयम् । भिया देयम् । संविदा देयम् ।

Give gifts with faith, not neglectfully but with joy, with humility, with fear and with kindness

अथ यदि ते कर्मविचिकित्सा वा वृत्तिविचिकित्सा वा स्यात् । ये तत्र ब्राह्मणाः संमर्शिनः, युक्ता आयुक्ताः, अलूक्षा

धर्मकामाः स्युः, यथा ते तत्र वर्तेरन् तथा तत्र वर्तेथाः। अथाभ्याख्यातेषु। ये तत्र ब्राह्मणाः संमर्शिनः, युक्ता आयुक्ताः, अलूक्षा धर्मकामाः स्युः, यथा ते तेषु वर्तेरन् तथा तेषु वर्तेथाः। एष आदेशः। एष उपदेशः॥

If your mind is troubled with any doubt as to what is right or wrong, follow the example of gentle and pious elders living in your neighbourhood in regard to those matters This is the rule and this the teaching

I-11

In the third *valli* of the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, *Varuna* instructs his son *Bhrigu* on the immanence of *Brahman* in matter as well as in the Spirit The food we eat and the air we breathe are sacred forms of *Brahman* that build us up, enable us to speak, think, act, exercise the will and understand

अन्नं ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात्
अन्नादेव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते।
अन्नेन जातानि जीवन्ति
अन्नं प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्तीति॥

He knew that food is **Brahman**, for from food, indeed, are born all beings in this world, by food do they live, and, after death, they become food again for other beings

III-2

We should not speak ill of food We should not throw away food We should produce plenty of food We should let no one who comes for food be turned away.

अन्न न निन्द्यात् । तद्व्रतम् ।
अन्न न परिचक्षीत । तद्व्रतम् ।
अन्न बहु कुर्वीत । तद्व्रतम् ।
न कचन वसतौ प्रत्याचक्षीत । तद्व्रतम् ॥

III-7-10

The teaching is that food should be looked upon as *Brahman,* for from food are born all beings, by food do they live, and they become food at their death It is a food, one for another, that all beings are made inter-dependent and made into one linked whole in the world

CHHANDOGYOPANISHAD

THE sixth chapter of the *Chhandogya Upanishad* begins with the old old riddle: Was there a first cause? Shall we, seeing that the search for causes leads us backwards along an interminable chain, give up the theory of causation and say that the world came out of nothing? This cannot be, says the *Rishi* Out of nothing, nothing could come Non-Being cannot produce Being Much less could the phenomenon of consciousness come out of nothing We must hold that there was a first Cause: *Sat* i.e., Being with consciousness

Sat willed that it may expand and multiply So it produced light, *Tejas* The Spirit in *Tejas* willed to multiply and produced water The Spirit in Water willed to become manifold, and it produced all the living things of the world

Lest the reader imagine that the march of modern science has made this explanation out of date, it may be recalled that neither Chemistry nor Biology nor any other physical science *explains* anything Plato depicted mankind as chained in a cave in such a way that they can look only on the wall which forms the back of the cave; they cannot see the busy life outside but only the

shadows which objects moving in the sunshine cast on the walls of the cave. For the captives in the cave, the shadows constitute the whole phenomenal world, the world of reality remaining for ever beyond their ken. Sir James Jeans, the great physicist, says that modern science has come to the same conclusion The reality behind the phenomenal world is unreachable. Chemical and other "laws" are only classifications and simplifications of observed phenomena, *and nothing more* Neither familiarity nor classification can itself be explanation. The unexplained factor outside the cave that permanently circumscribes our knowledge is the *Sat* of the Chhandogya.

"How can this vast universe with its multitudinous variety be produced in this simple way?" asked Svetaketu, whom his father, Uddalaka, was instructing as to how the entire world has been evolved out of the *Sat*

न्यग्रोधफलमत आहरेतीद भगव इति, भिन्धीति, भिन्न
भगव इति, किमत्र पश्यसीत्यण्व्य इवेमा धाना भगव इत्या-
सामगैकां भिन्धीति, भिन्ना भगव इति, किमत्र पश्यसीति, न
किचन भगव इति ॥१॥ तं होवाच य वै सोम्यैतमणिमानं न
निभालयस एतस्य वै सोम्यैषोऽणिम्न एवं महान्न्यग्रोधस्तिष्ठति,
श्रद्धत्स्व सोम्येति ॥२॥ स य एषोऽणिमैतदात्म्यमिदं सर्वं तत्सत्यं
स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो इति, भूय एव मा भगवान्
विज्ञापयित्वति, तथा सोम्येति होवाच ॥३॥

"Fetch a fruit of the big fig tree,' said Uddalaka

"Here is one, Sir," said Svetaketu
"Break it, what do you see there?"
"These little seeds"
"Crush one of the little seeds"
"Yes, Sir, I have done it"
"What do you see inside?"
"Nothing," said the son

"Yet in the subtle substance inside that little seed, which your eye does not even perceive, existed all this big branching nyagrodha tree Do you wonder at it? Likewise all that exists, this universe, was in that Sat which thou too art Believe it, dear child, thou art that"

VI-(12)-1-3

"If the Sat is the all-pervading cause of all, why is it not perceived clearly?" is the next question

As a lump of salt is dissolved in water and disappears, so is the *Sat* lost from view in the world but is still immanent in everything in the universe, as the salt is present in every part of the water The following is a vivid account of the instruction in this regard, which reminds one of a modern laboratory lecture

लवणमेतदुदकेऽवधायाथ मा प्रातरुपसीदथा इति, स ह तथा चकार, त होवाच यद्दोषा लवणमुदकेऽवाधा अग तदाहरेति, तद्धावमृश्य न विवेद ॥१॥ यथा विलीनमेवांगास्यान्तादाचामेति, कथमिति, लवणमिति, मध्यादाचामेति, कथमिति, लवणमित्यन्तादाचामेति, कथमिति, लवणमित्यभिप्रास्यैतदथ मोपसीदथा इति, तद्ध तथा चकार, तच्छश्वत्संवर्तते, तं होवाचात्र वाव किल सत्सोम्य न निभालयसेऽत्रैव किलेति ॥२॥ स य एषोऽणिमैतदात्म्यमिद सर्व तत्सत्य स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो इति, भूय एव मा भगवान् विज्ञापयत्विति, तथा सोम्येति होवाच ॥३॥

VI-(13)-1-3

'How are we to gain knowledge of the *Sat*. which is imperceptible?' is the next question

यथा सोम्य पुरुषं गन्धारेभ्योऽभिनद्धाक्षमानीय तं ततोऽतिजने विसृजेत्स यथा तत्र प्राङ्वोदङ्वाऽधराङ्वा प्रत्यङ्वा प्रध्मायीताभिनद्धाक्ष आनीतोऽभिनद्धाक्षो विसृष्ट. ॥१॥ तस्य यथाभिनहन प्रमुच्य प्रब्रूयादेता दिश गन्धारा एतां दिशं व्रजेति, स ग्रामाद्ग्रामं पृच्छन् पण्डितो मेधावी गन्धारानेवोपसंपद्येतैवमेवेहाचार्यवान् पुरुषो वेद, तस्य तावदेव चिरं यावन्न विमोक्ष्येऽथ सपत्स्य इति ॥२॥ स य एषोऽणिमैतदात्म्यमिदं सर्व तत्सत्यं स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो इति, भूय एव मा भगवान्विज्ञापयत्विति, तथा सोम्येति होवाच ॥३॥

Like unto that of a man blindfolded and carried away by robbers from his own country is man's condition. The folds of cloth over his eyes being removed by a friend, he recovers the use of his eyes and slowly finds his way home, step by step, enquiring at each stage. So also, the good teacher instructs the seeker of Truth and helps him to unloose his bonds of desire, and saves him from the robbers. The robbers are his past deeds that brought him to this condition. Recovering his sight as soon as the desires and attachments that blind his vision are removed, he finds his way to the Sat. Thereafter, it is only a matter of waiting for natural death.

VI-(14)-1-3

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवा भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ॥ स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवांसस्तनूभिर्व्यशेमहि देवहितं यदायुः । स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः । स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥ ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

May our ears hear what is good, may our eyes see what is good May we, what time we live, be blessed with healthy limbs and body, that we may glorify the Lord May all the gods bless us May our minds be at peace

This *Upanishad* consists of Angiras's instruction to his disciple, Shaunaka.

तस्मै स होवाच । द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये इति स्म यद्ब्रह्मविदो वदन्ति, परा चैवापरा च ॥४॥ तत्रापरा ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदोऽथर्ववेदः शिक्षा कल्पो व्याकरणं निरुक्तं छन्दो ज्योतिषमिति । अथ परा, यया तदक्षरमधिगम्यते ॥५॥

There are two sciences worthy of being learnt, of which the learned treat one as higher, and the other as lower The Vedas, the **Rig Veda**, the **Yujur Veda**, the **Sama Veda**, the

Atharva Veda, intonation, ritual, grammar, etymology, metre, astronomy and all else that is commonly known as learning constitute the lower knowledge, the higher is that by which the Ever-existing is realised *

I-(1)-4, 5

प्लावा ह्येते अदृढा यज्ञरूपा अष्टादशोक्तमवरं येषु कर्म ।
एतच्छ्रेयो येऽभिनन्दन्ति मूढा जरामृत्युं ते पुनरेवापि यान्ति ॥७॥
अविद्यायामन्तरे वर्तमानाः स्वयं धीराः पण्डितंमन्यमानाः । जंघ-
न्यमानाः परियन्ति मूढा अन्धेनैव नीयमाना यथान्धाः ॥८॥

Ceremonials and sacrifices lead men round and round, and not to the ultimate goal to which an understanding of the Self alone can lead

The popular belief as regards the efficacy of sacrifice, is, though not rudely negatived politely put aside in the Upanishads as not leading to what is true and imperishable happiness

The passage that occurs in the Katha Upanishad about fools fancying themselves learned appears here with but one small change

* It should be remembered that the Veda was the encyclopaedia of all the knowledge of those days, and not a hymn-book only

Light is here thrown on what is meant by the important term **avidya** which occurs in the **Katha** and **Isavasya Upanishads** and also in the **Gita** (ch 2. 42 43)

I-(2)-7, 8

परीक्ष्य लोकान्कर्मचितान्ब्राह्मणो निर्वेदमायान्नास्त्यकृतः कृतेन। तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत्समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम् ॥१२॥

Realizing this, the seeker should abandon his desire and attachments for things transient, and respectfully approach a teacher who is qualified by learning and conduct to impart the higher knowledge

I-(2)-12

तदेतत्सत्यम् यथा सुदीप्तात्पावकाद्विस्फुलिङ्गाः सहस्रशः प्रभवन्ते स्वरूपाः। तथाऽक्षराद्विविधाः सोम्य भावाः प्रजायन्ते तत्र चैवापियन्ति ॥१॥

This deals with the relationship between the Individual Soul and the Absolute Being

The Soul is like the spark that is thrown out and re-absorbed by the blazing fire

It is left to be inferred that it is of the same nature as the fire, and does not exist apart from it

II (1) 1

अग्निर्मूर्धा चक्षुषी चन्द्रसूर्यौ दिशः श्रोत्रे वाग्विवृताश्च वेदाः। वायुः प्राणो हृदयं विश्वमस्य पद्भ्यां पृथिवी ह्येष सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ॥४॥ तस्मादग्निः समिधो यस्य सूर्यः सोमात्पर्जन्य ओषधयः पृथिव्याम्। पुमान् रेतः सिञ्चति योषितायां बह्वीः प्रजाः पुरुषात्प्रसूताः ॥५॥

The whole universe is a manifestation and product of that universal, formless, causeless Being The sun, moon and all the quarters, all knowledge, and the souls of all existing beings are parts and manifestations of that single all-immanent Being All life and all qualities, functions and activities are forms of that single Energy He is the Fire which has lighted the Sun and makes it burn, like a log burning in the fire Thereby does the sun give us warmth and light The rain does not rain, but it is He that rains through the clouds Beings come together and multiply, but it is He alone that multiplies through them

II (1) 4, 5

अतः समुद्रा गिरयश्च सर्वेऽस्मात्स्यन्दन्ते सिन्धवः सर्वरूपाः । अतश्च सर्वा ओषधयो रसाश्च येनैष भूतैस्तिष्ठते ह्यन्तरात्मा ॥९॥ पुरुष एवेदं विश्वं कर्म तपो ब्रह्म परामृतम् । एतद्यो वेद निहितं गुहायां सोऽविद्याग्रन्थिं विकिरतीह सोम्य ॥१०॥

From Him have issued all the mountains and the seas, the rivers, the trees and plants and their life-bearing essences He who thus knows the Supreme Spirit that dwells within the heart, dear boy, cuts off all the knots of ignorance which bind man

II (1) 9-10

आविः संनिहितं गुहाचरं नाम महत्पदमत्रैतत्समर्पितम् । एजत्प्राणन्निमिषच्च यदेतज्जानथ सदसद्वरेण्यं परं विज्ञानाद्यद्वरिष्ठं प्रजानाम् ॥ १ ॥

He has taken shape and dwells near, yea, in the cave of the human heart Everything that moves, breathes or twinkles, moves and lives in Him All that exists, as well as all ideas, even those which the mind indicates to itself as inconceivable, issue out of His presence

II (2) 1

धनुर्गृहीत्वौपनिषदं महास्त्रं शरं ह्युपासानिशितं सधयीत । आयम्य तद्भावगतेन चेतसा लक्ष्यं तदेवाक्षरं सोम्य विद्धि ॥३॥ प्रणवो धनुः शरो ह्यात्मा ब्रह्म तल्लक्ष्यमुच्यते । अप्रमत्तेन वेद्धव्यं शरवत्तन्मयो भवेत् ॥४॥

To perceive this Absolute Foundation of all existence, the mind must be as concentrated on it as an archer concentrates on his target The Upanishad, i e, knowledge received from the teacher, is the bow The understanding Self should, like an arrow sharpened by devotion, be placed in it Directing it at the target, viz, the **Brahman,** pull the bow-string well with concentrated mind and you will hit the target As a skilful archer, when aiming, makes his arrow merge in the target in his sight, and the two become but one and the same thing, so should your Self, the arrow, be merged by concentration in the target, **viz., Brahman**

II (2) 3, 4

When the pupil pulls the bow-string with steady aim, if the teacher asks him, "What do you see?" the pupil should be able to reply truly that he sees nothing but the point he aims at He must see neither bow, nor arrow, nor anything else but **Brahman**

यस्मिन्द्यौः पृथिवी चान्तरिक्षमोतं मनः सह प्राणैश्च सर्वैः। तमेवैकं जानथ आत्मानमन्या वाचो विमुञ्चथामृतस्यैष सेतुः ॥५॥

He is the whole Universe Heaven, Earth and Sky, your mind and your life-breath are all woven into Him All other knowledge is a mere snare of words to be escaped from He is the one and only Existence This knowledge is the bridge leading to Immortality

II (2)-5

सर्वज्ञः यः सर्वविद्यस्यैष महिमा भुवि ॥ दिव्ये ब्रह्मपुरे ह्येष व्योम्न्यात्मा संप्रतिष्ठितः। मनोमयः प्राणशरीरनेता प्रतिष्ठितोऽन्ने हृदयं सन्निधाय ॥ तद्विज्ञानेन परिपश्यन्ति धीरा आनन्दरूपममृतं यद्विभाति ॥६॥

He is within our own hearts He has lodged Himself in the food-sustained body of men and rules both body and life, even He that sustains the whole universe and all its glory The unruffled spirits contemplate on Him and realize his Deathless form of absolute joy

II-(2)-7

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः। क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे ॥८॥

When His presence in our own bodies and His immanence in every aspect of existence is realized, all doubts, all attachments and all activities vanish

II (2)-8

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति
कुतोऽयमग्निः । तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं
विभाति ॥१०॥ ब्रह्मैवेदममृतं पुरस्ताद्ब्रह्म पश्चाद्ब्रह्म
दक्षिणतश्चोत्तरेण । अधश्चोर्ध्वं च प्रसृतं ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वमिदं
वरिष्ठम् ॥११॥

On realizing Him, what is individual life? What even are the sun and the moon, the stars and the lightning of the clouds? What need be said, then, of this fire? All these are but reflections of that One Undying Light He fills all the quarters and all overhead and down below He alone exists.

II-(2)-10, 11

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ॥१॥
समाने वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नोऽनीशया शोचति मुह्यमानः । जुष्टं
यदा पश्यत्यन्यमीशमस्य महिमानमिति वीतशोकः ॥२॥ यदा
पश्यः पश्यते रुक्मवर्णं कर्तारमीशं पुरुषं ब्रह्मयोनिम् । तदा
विद्वान्पुण्यपापे विधूय निरंजनः परमं साम्यमुपैति ॥३॥

Man's suffering lasts only until he sees the Supreme Being that dwells within himself The In-dwelling Supreme Spirit and the Individual Soul are like two birds They cling to one another and are on the same tree One eats the fruits of the tree, the other looks on, happy One is attached to works, the other is free When a man sees the Universal Ruler in himself, then the distinction between Good and Evil drops out He is freed from passions and reaches the goal, i e, becomes one with the Universal

III-(1)-1, 3

How can one be enabled to have a vision of the Supreme Being within oneself? Mere learning does not reveal Him One has to realize that the Lord is the life that lives and the light that shines in everything When he realizes this, he loses his dependence on externals and finds bliss in himself

प्राणो ह्येष य सर्वभूतैर्विभाति विजानन्विद्वान्भवते नातिवादी । आत्मक्रीड आत्मरति क्रियावानेष ब्रह्मविदां वरिष्ठः ।

The man who realizes "It is the Supreme Life that shines in and through all life" does not waste words His pleasures and his Love

are then all in the soul He becomes the most enlightened among the philosophers

III-(1)-4

सत्येन लभ्यस्तपसा ह्येष आत्मा सम्यग्ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यम् । अन्त:शरीरे ज्योतिर्मयो हि शुभ्रो यं पश्यन्ति यतयः क्षीणदोषा: ॥

Truth, penance, understanding and purity are essential requisites for this revelation of the **Brahman** within When the heart is cleansed, **Brahman** is revealed, and He is seen shining like a burning light within oneself

III-(1)-5

सत्यमेव जयते नानृतं सत्येन पन्था विततो देवयानः ।
येनाक्रमन्त्यृषयो ह्याप्तकामा यत्र तत्सत्यस्य परमं निधानम् ॥

Truth wins ever, and not untruth With Truth is paved the road to the Divine On that road walk the **Rishis** with desires all quenched to reach the Supreme Abode of Truth

III-(1)-6

Truth is the only pathway to God, and the seers pursue this to reach Him This emphatic dependence on Truth is the dominating characteristic of the *Upanishads*

The Lord is not to be apprehended by the senses, but only by the mind into which all the senses have been drawn in. All thought is interwoven with the senses, and it is only when the mind is released from all this and is in a state of perfect freedom and tranquillity, that the Lord reveals Himself.

न चक्षुषा गृह्यते नापि वाचा नान्यैर्देवैस्तपसा कर्मणा वा। ज्ञानप्रसादेन विशुद्धसत्त्वस्ततस्तु तं पश्यते निष्कलं ध्यायमानः ॥८॥ एषोऽणुरात्मा चेतसा वेदितव्यो यस्मिन्प्राणः पंचधा संविवेश। प्राणैश्चित्तं सर्वमोतं प्रजानां यस्मिन्विशुद्धे विभवत्येष आत्मा ॥९॥

Not by the eyes nor by speech or through other senses can He be apprehended, not even by austerities or ceremonials. He whose mind is pure and serene can by meditation attain a vision of the Indivisible. The Subtle Spirit dwelling within, into which the five-fold life has entered, can be realized by the understanding. If the understanding that is pierced and pervaded by the senses is purified, then the spirit reveals itself unto it.

III-(1)-8, 9

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूं स्वाम् ॥

This appears in the **Kathopanishad** also

Much learning or scholarly discussion, or force of intellect cannot enable one to realize the Spirit within

The Spirit that yearns for self-realization realizes itself

III-(2)-3

The yearning for realization automatically destroys other desires and attachments, and enables one to reach self-realization

The feeble-minded, who do not make earnest effort through well-directed meditation and control of mind and senses, cannot hope to realize the Self within The will to realize and strenuous effort are necessary *Balam* in the following *sloka* stands for effort and strength exercised in the way of self-control and steady application

नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यो न च प्रमादात्तपसो वाप्य-
लिङ्गात् । एतैरुपायैर्यतते यस्तु विद्वांस्तस्यैष आत्मा विशते
ब्रह्मधाम ॥

Realization of the Soul cannot be attained by a man who has not strength and a vigilant spirit. It cannot be atttained by austerities without devotion But if with understanding

a man strives with these aids, his soul enters the Abode of **Brahman.**

III-(2)-4

वेदान्तविज्ञानसुनिश्चितार्था. संन्यासयोगाद्यतयः शुद्ध-सत्त्वाः । ते ब्रह्मलोकेषु परान्तकाले परामृता परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे ॥६॥

यथा नद्यः स्यन्दमाना. समुद्रेऽस्तं गच्छन्ति नामरूपे विहाय । तथा विद्वान्नामरूपाद्विमुक्तः परात्परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥ ८ ॥

Knowledge and discipline are mutually complementary Vedanta explains the true nature of what we seek Yoga, i e, detachment and self-discipline, purifies the mind and enables it to perceive the Truth Those whose understanding has been thus enlightened as well as purified become one with the Universal Spirit They join the Supreme Being and lose themselves in Him even as all the rivers join and lose themselves in the great ocean

III-(2)-6, 8

Here ends our little book Let us bow to the Rishis

नमः परम ऋषिभ्यो । नमः परम ऋषिभ्यः ।

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C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

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Chapter I

VEDANTA AND THE NEW ORDER

TRUTH being one and indivisible, the prevailing contradictions in science, religion and politics are bound to be harmful to social well-being. Disharmony in fundamentals leads to doubt, pain, hypocrisy and frustration We cannot afford the waste of human effort that is involved in this. The laws of nature that we know, the philosophy we believe in, the state-craft that we practise, should all be made to accord and harmonize with one another. If we have real belief in truth and something of the courage and adventure of the earlier builders of human civilization, we need not despair of achieving this

What is taught as science and implicitly accepted as truth is expected to be forgotten or put aside in religion Again, the faith that is insisted on as sacred and inviolable in religion is expected to be pigeon-holed when practising state-craft and not allowed to play any part In order to bring this about we resort to various forms of self-deception, and practise fraud on our children with the deliberate object of keeping the disharmony going through generations A simultaneous acceptance of contradictory ideas, even if *bona fide*, cannot be a healthy process The wages of untruth is spiritual death The chief stock-in-trade of progress, the minds and the intellects of men and women, is subjected to continual damage. How can this be good for mankind as a whole, or for the individual?

In the olden days there was not so much contradiction The backwardness of science was a factor that reduced the contradiction Fervent adherence to religion and philosophy not only did not cause disharmony but on the contrary led men to great achievement. This was possible because they did not try to believe in contrary things Science has now grown and has been accepted on a much wider scale than ever before As a result the maladjustment is at present more serious

As for the contradictions between religion and political activities, the divergence is even greater than between science and religion It is a miracle that honest professing Christians preserve their sanity under the conditions of current national and international activities The State permits, aids and abets the total infringement of what is read and taught as the word of Christ The reign of relentless competition, the right to make maximum private profit at the expense of others, and the exploitation of advantages gained so that differences between man and man may grow in geometric progression, are all denials of Christ, and yet for the execution of such unchristian plans, institutions equal in respectability to cathedrals and churches are established under the authority or protection of the State Civilization must crumble under the weight of this hypocrisy The dissent of certain individuals who express their opinions without materially interfering with the existing order, far from being as at first it may appear a relieving feature, is mere escapism if not a variety of abetment of the crime

It is obvious that any religion or philosophy contrary to modern science is bound to be sham and hypocrisy If we desire to secure a firm basis

for human progress, all maladjustments either between science and religion or between religion and state-craft must be rectified so that integrated thought and feeling may be established In India there is a religious philosophy as old as civilization itself which, strange as the claim may seem to outsiders, is remarkably consistent with science Out of that religious philosophy has been evolved a code of ethics which can be a firm spiritual basis for a juster social and economic organization It is remarkable that the evolutionary hypothesis and the rule of law as the men of science know it, were anticipated in Hinduism The God of Vedanta is not an anthropomorphic creation of human fancy Divine sovereignty is explained in the Gita in language which anticipates and meets the difficulties that modern science raises against religious cosmology The sovereignty of God is exercised in and through the unchangeable law of cause and effect, through the laws of nature in all spheres

"All things abide in Me, yet behold the wonder, I stand apart and Nature works by herself *Prakriti* brings forth the moving and unmoving without my interference"

A study of the Upanishads will show that Vedanta has anticipated science by postulating that the universe has developed by a gradual unfoldment of the power lodged within the primordial substance In fact the philosophy of Hinduism is nearer to the evolutionary and atomic theories of natural science and physics than the doctrines of any other religion The dominant characteristic of the Upanishads is what distinguishes scientific

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* Gita IX 4-10

research, insistence on adherence to truth and tireless investigation

Planned co-operative economy, in place of profit-motive and the so-called civil liberty of private competition, cannot safely depend on mere external authority however powerful We must have a culture and a generally accepted code of spiritual values which work as a law from within Without such spiritual control, mere material planning must needs culminate in widespread corruption and fraud Vedanta and the ethic which follows from it and which is expanded and fully set out in the Bhagavad-Gita, are pre-eminently fitted to serve as the spiritual basis for planned co-operative community-life, wherein everyone must work according to capacity and gets according to need

Work without aiming at personal profit and with an eye only to the welfare of the community is the way of life taught in the Bhagavad-Gita It lays emphasis on the equal dignity and sacredness of all labour that falls to one's lot, and on honest effort with detachment and without agitation over results Indeed the Gita lays down in a unique manner the socialist doctrine in terms of religion The performance of one's allotted task, says the Gita, is nothing less than worship of God in the truest sense

We want a wise allotment of work to individuals as well as groups in accordance with the demands of the general interest in place of *laissez-faire* and the divine right to make private profit If we want society to control individual life so as to produce this result, we cannot depend only on the

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* Gita XVIII 45-49

spy and the policeman watching over citizens We must build up a spiritual life which makes joy out of discharge of duty and acts as a law from within, making the execution of State-imposed laws easy In Vedanta we have a teaching rooted in immemorial tradition in India which can serve as the spiritual and cultural basis for a new and juster economy of life

What is Vedanta and what is the Vedantic way of life? In the following pages will be found an attempt to explain this in as brief and simple terms as possible, from which the reader can see for himself whether the claim made herein is justified

Chapter II

THE SOURCE OF VEDANTA

"Let the whole world rise against me Let calumny and ridicule be poured on me Let me lose all my precious possessions and be driven to beg for livelihood Let my very friends turn against me and put poison in my food Let men attack me arrayed in numbers and armed with deadly weapons Let the very heavens break and fall on my head There is no fear in my heart, none" Thus sang Bharati, the Tamil poet, referring to the fearlessness that emerges out of Vedanta Vedanta is the tap-root of Indian culture in the past as well as now. Whatever courage, heroism, self-sacrifice or greatness was shown by men and women in India, was all derived from Vedanta, the philosophy of the Vedas Even now Vedanta is the living spirit and genius of the people of India However much foreign civilization or new aspirations may affect us, the main source has not decayed The lives of the rich and the poor, of the leisured classes and the peasants and labourers, of Hindus, Mussalmans and Christians, of the illiterate and the learned, of the honest and the dishonest, are sweetened alike by the pervasive fragrance of Indian philosophy Vedanta is the basic culture of India.

The Upanishads are the source of Vedanta When we study ancient books we should not expect them to be like books written yesterday When they were written the world, this country and the lives and habits of men were all very

different from what they are today. We may not forget this great difference and interpret and judge books written several thousands of years ago in the light of modern controversies Books written in those days must deal with matters in relation to the life of those days. We should exercise our imagination and intelligence to re-create the old life and read the books of Indian *rishis* on that background, although printed now on modern paper in modern type

The principal teaching of the Upanishads is this: Man cannot achieve permanent happiness through physical enjoyment, through wealth or the goods of the world, or even by elevation to happier realms above through the performance of sacrifices prescribed by the Vedas — the potency of which was a matter of implicit belief in those times Happiness can result only from liberation and only spiritual enlightenment can liberate us breaking the bond of *Karma* and uniting us with the Ultimate Being

The path of enlightenment runs through stages The *mantras* of the Upanishads may appear to contradict one another in some places But if it is remembered that the truth is taught by degrees, the contradictions disappear When the Upanishads were composed, there was no education except through oral instruction received by the disciple living in intimate companionship with the teacher There was no such thing as reading a book taken out of a library or bought at a book-shop.

In Vedanta, there are no separate cults based on the worship of Siva or of Vishnu Controversies over who is the greater god or by which name the Supreme Being should be adored do not find a place in it In his treatises on Vedanta,

Sankaracharya uses the word 'Narayana' to indicate the Supreme Being In the Saiva-siddhanta books, the final Reality is called 'Siva' Names, mental conceptions of the Deity for purposes of contemplation, the images of worship, even the sound 'Om' are mere means to turn our hearts towards the Supreme Vedanta is the common heritage of all of us in India in whatever denomination we may have been brought up

Chapter III

THE FIRST STEP

It is not the teaching of Vedanta that we should renounce the world It is a mistake to identify Vedanta with retirement from life and social activities Vedanta calls for renunciation of attachment, desires and passions, but not of daily duties in co-operative life Vedanta gives us the soul-force that will enable us to root out selfishness, egotism, attachment to pleasure and the horror of pain, and to dedicate our lives to the efficient performance of our duties Out of Vedanta we can develop resolution and fearlessness in the effort to lead a life of truth

The first step in Vedanta is to reach the firm conviction that 'I' am entirely different from 'my body' Is there any distinct thing that may be called 'Soul' within the body? Is it a thing altogether apart from the physical body, or is it merely a functioning of the body, which we wrongly regard as a separate entity? When the body dies, does the soul also pass away with it or does it continue to have a separate existence? The ultimate cause of all ills in this world is lack of a firm conviction on this point. Even if doubts are dispelled to our satisfaction at one point of time, they return again and again and overwhelm us It is only when man becomes enlightened and attains the firm conviction that there is a spirit within him distinct from the body and the senses,

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* Gita III 20-29

that his life becomes one of unswerving truth and detachment If men attain that enlightenment, the world will be redeemed

This first clear understanding of the truth about the soul is important That is why the Upanishads speak not only of the *Paramatman*, the Supreme Being, but deal again and again and in many and various ways with the individual soul If once it is realized beyond all doubt that the body is different from the person who dwells in that body, Vedantic life will automatically unfold itself

Chapter IV

THE GOOD LIFE

WE should see the soul which is hidden within our inmost being. 'Seeing' here means the complete elimination of doubt and the full realization of the truth. To 'see' the soul, intelligence and enquiry are not enough. Goodness and purity of life are necessary.*

A wall or a hill is visible to saint and sinner alike. So also the truth in a proposition of Euclid. Why then are self-control and equanimity needed to see the soul? A teacher's guidance and reflexion may be things needed for knowledge. How do faults of character matter? The answer to this question constitutes the most important part of Vedanta.

The soul is not like a material limb or organ of the body. It is not located in any particular part of the body. It permeates body and mind. Unless the mind is clear, that which permeates it will not assume any distinctness or become known. It is one thing to see external objects. It is an altogether different process to perceive an entity which permeates and is hidden in our inner being. Introspection by itself may enable us to analyse our own minds. But to see the soul we should not only direct our eyes inwards but calm the mind and clear it of passion. Without purity and a state of detachment the medium is turbid and what is in the back of the mind, so to say, cannot

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* Kathopanishad II 23, 24

be seen It is not ignorance but desires and attachments that blind our vision If this truth is realized, it will be seen why a virtuous life and a pure heart are necessary to realize the soul within us It will then be also evident that all the three paths commonly referred to in orthodox commentaries on Vedanta as distinct paths, *viz*, the way of enlightenment, the way of faith and the way of good works are one and the same

So, then, the mind and the senses must be properly brought under control in order to realize the spirit within us distinct from the body Our reason must be cleared of the delusions born of passions and desires With unremitting attention, the understanding must control the mind and the senses The effort to secure this is called by the oft-repeated but much misunderstood term, *Yoga* If this state is reached, we can 'see' the spirit that is lodged within us The state of mind reached through self-control and internal peace has to be maintained with vigilance Like sunrise and sunset, the state of mind called *Yoga* appears and disappears, reappears and again disappears The path to *Yoga* is constant effort and unrelaxed vigilance, otherwise we lapse back and the soul is lost in the body and we take the one for the other as we did before

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* Kathopanishad IV 1, 2

Chapter V

EVOLUTION

THE sixth chapter of the Chhandogya Upanishad begins with the old, old riddle. Was there a First Cause? Shall we, seeing that the search for causes takes us backwards along an interminable chain of causes, give up the theory of causation and say that the world came out of nothing?

This cannot be, says the *Rishi*. Out of nothing, nothing can come. Non-being cannot produce Being. In the causeless beginning, therefore, we must hold that there was a first cause. *Sat, i e*, Being with consciousness. And *Sat* willed to expand and multiply and became light, water and all the living forms in the world, serving as food for one another and growing and multiplying. It is the *Sat* that is still multiplying and expanding.

"How can this vast universe with its multitudinous variety be produced in this simple way?" asked Svetaketu, whom his father Uddalaka was instructing.

"Fetch a fruit of that *nyagrodha* tree," said Uddalaka. "Here is one, sir," said Svetaketu. "Break it, what do you see therein?" "I see some little seeds," said Svetaketu. "Crush one of the tiny seeds," said the father. "Yes, I have done it, sir." "What do you see therein?" "Nothing," said Svetaketu.

"Yet in that subtle substance inside that tiny seed, which is hardly visible to the eye, existed all this big-branching *nyagrodha* tree. Do you

wonder at it? Likewise all that exists in this universe was in the *Sat*, and dear boy, thou too art That Contemplate on it"

In the Mundaka Upanishad the *Rishi* says

"The whole Universe is an unfoldment of the primordial Being The sun, the moon and all the quarters of the world, all knowledge and the souls of all the existing beings are parts and manifestations of that single all-immanent Being All life, all qualities, functions and activities are forms of that single Energy It lighted up the sun and therefore does the sun burn like a faggot and give warmth and light to us The rain does not rain but it is the primordial Cause that rains through and by means of the clouds Beings come together and multiply, but it is the First Cause that through them still multiplies The mountains and the seas, the rivers, and the trees and herbs and their life-bearing essences, all have issued out of that Immanent Spirit that dwells in all things and in all our hearts Know it, my dear boy, and cut asunder the knots of ignorance that bind"

* II 4, 5, 9, 10

Chapter VI

MAYA

WE have heard it said by Vedantins that this world is an illusion This does not mean that the world is not real The world is real All the teachers who taught about *Maya* and God have lived their lives on the basis that this world is a reality Leaving aside the weak and the hypocritical who teach one thing and practise another, if we reflect on the actual lives of the good and great Vedantins who lived in the light of truth, it will be evident that they took this world and this life and the law of *Karma* to be hard realities If still they taught the doctrine that all is *Maya*, that everything is an illusion created by the Lord, what does the teaching mean?

When it is said that the Lord is all, it means that He is the indwelling spirit that makes all life live As the soul is to the body, so is the Lord the soul of all souls When one says 'I went,' 'I came', 'I did', though outwardly the act of the body, it is really the act of the person that dwells within and brings about all the activity. It would be a mistake to believe that the body is the agent In the same way, the Supreme Being is the soul of our souls. Every movement of the individual soul is an activity of the Lord All souls are so to say His bodies The Lord is a reality and so are the souls that are permeated by Him The body is a reality although it is the spirit within that gives to the body its life Going one step further, that which gives life and reality

to the individual souls and makes them what they are is the Supreme Being The *Paramatman* permeates and supports all souls, but that does not mean that the latter are unreal. The universe as a whole and every individual living and non-living thing severally serve as bodies for the All-pervading Universal Being.

The doctrine of *Maya* does not mean that everything is unreal and that we are free to act as we please. Life is real and life is subject to eternal and unchangeable law This and not Unreality is the true implication of the Vedantic doctrine

Chapter VII

ONE LIFE IN ALL

So, then, within the body, the soul which fills it with life. and within the soul, the Supreme Soul which fills the individual soul and gives it its being, this according to Vedanta is the structure of life Just as the soul gives to the body the capacity to function as a person, so does the Supreme Being give to the soul its capacity to function as an individual soul

The same soul takes many bodies in various births When it does so, it has no memory of its past or knowledge of its own true nature. The soul identifies itself completely with the body which it bears for the time being In like manner all souls which form at one and the same time the body of the Supreme Soul do not realize it but carry on as if separate from one another Though the *antaratman*, the indweller, is one and the same, each soul lives a life of separate individuality, with no sense of identity with others. This is what is called *Maya* In the learned and the illiterate, in the hero and the coward, in the strong and the weak, in the mighty and the lowly, in all the multitudes of living beings, it is the Supreme Soul that, abiding in every one of them, makes them what they are

The indwelling Spirit is hidden from our perception by our desires and distractions, by our pleasures and pains The *atman* becomes altogether inaccessible to our intelligence The spirit suffers no taint though lying hidden in the

midst of a heap of impurities If the mind be concentrated, the senses controlled and the heart drawn away from external objects, the turbid consciousness gets clear and then we begin to see the soul as something real and distinct from the body within which it is lodged. We shall see, besides, the Divine Spirit that dwells within that soul. When it is fully realized that it is the Supreme Soul that lives and acts within all, pleasures and pains vanish

Sunlight has no shape It shines equally in all directions But shadows have shapes It is the obstruction to light that becomes the shadow. If there is no limitation or obstruction, light spreads and shines evenly The individual souls are the shadows that are caused in the path of the infinite light of the Supreme Being As soon as the obstruction is removed, the shadow merges in the light *Karma* causes the shadow, i e the separate births and lives The Supreme Being is the light. The shadow takes shape as the individual soul

This way of looking at it should not lead one to think that Vedanta is a doctrine of illusion and unreality The shadow that is caused by the light of the sun is not an unreality The shadow is as true as the light although it is a fact that it is the light that makes the changing shadow

Chapter VIII

SALVATION

MOKSHA or deliverance is the soul's realization of the Supreme Being. *Moksha* is not arrival in another world or place When the mind is enlightened by the knowledge that the soul and the indwelling Supreme Soul are one, the shadow merges in the light This is liberation. It is the loss of all feeling of distinction and the recognition that everything around us is the body of the Supreme Soul The word *Moksha* in Sanskrit means simply Release. *Moksha* is a state of being It is not a place, palace, garden or world Therefore sang the Tamil saint

"When purified having travelled on the road
to Truth,
With the senses well-withdrawn, and the mind
Rapt in meditation of the boundless
One,
All pleasure and pain wither away
And attachment dies,
Then and there is Heaven
And the joy that is Heaven
Attaining enlightenment
Abandoning all attachments,
If one stands serene without any concern,
It is liberation It is Bliss
Not knowing this, they ask in ignorance
Where is Heaven? Where is Heaven?
What is the nature of Bliss?
And lose themselves in endless confusion"

Differences in method of exposition arise when explaining the mutual relation of body, soul and the Supreme Being The third Entity, the *Paramatman,* eludes our grasp and so our great teachers have adopted various methods of elucidation Below are a few examples:

It is the soul that gives the body its quality as a living body It is the Supreme Being that endows the individual soul with its quality as a divine spark The soul upholds the life in the body The Supreme Soul upholds the divine nature of the soul Just as in this mortal life, body and soul can exist as one in happy combination, so also if the individual souls live in happy unity with the Supreme Soul and without any imperfection, ignorance or distraction, it is *Moksha.* In order to attain this unity with the Supreme Soul, purity of life and self-control are needed

We may look at it in another way. The individual soul is only the shadow of the Supreme Universal Soul Ignorance is the cause of the shadow and of the impression that the shadow is different from the thing which produces it This feeling of separation grows more and more through desire, attachment, anger and hatred When the mind awakens, the two merge into one

The sun shines on the water When the surface of the water breaks into ripples we see numerous little suns on the water The individual souls are like the reflections of the sun in water If there be no water there will be no reflections. In the same way, the individual souls become one with the Supreme on the removal of ignorance. To dispel ignorance and to obtain knowledge, we

need purity, self-control, devotion and discrimination.

Just as all the five senses merge in the soul and disappear when we sleep at night, so also the enlightened soul is united and absorbed in the Supreme Soul

These and several other forms of elucidation are adopted by the various Vedantic schools of thought, *viz*, the Dwaita (dualist), Advaita (monist) and Visishtadvaita (qualified monist) philosophers Though the methods of elucidation and teaching may differ, the Vedantic life which is the way of liberation recommended by all of them is just the same All schools of Vedanta lead to the same ethic, and this binds all Vedantins in one outlook

Chapter IX

THE ETHICS OF VEDANTA

WHEN we come to understand the relation between the individual *atman* and the Supreme Soul, the feeling of separation between one living being and another melts away. To attain freedom from the sense of separation is not a process of knowledge, a gathering of information, but a change of state, something like waking from sleep. A man has a dream. He is distressed by what he sees in the dream. How can he escape from this distress? Relief can come only through waking from sleep and realizing that he was dreaming. Similarly, we should wake up from the separation that deludes the soul and liberate ourselves from our sorrows. Therefore do the Upanishads proclaim: "Arise! Awake! Arise!"

The realization that the Supreme Soul is within us is therefore a change of state like waking from sleep. It is not like learning from another who has seen that someone is in the next room, a mere piece of knowledge obtained by enquiry.

It is easy to wake up from sleep. But it is not easy to wake up from the great sleep of worldly life. Our mental disposition must change entirely. First of all the desire to wake up must surge in the heart. Secondly, unremitting vigilance must be exercised like that of a performer on the tight-rope who cannot, once having secured his balance, go to sleep on it. The external and internal sense must be controlled, right conduct must be maintained until it becomes a matter of

course, and the inner being must be kept in a pure and untarnished condition. Perpetual vigilance over one's mind is necessary to escape slipping back into the world of distinctions

Impelled by ignorance, we seek temporary pleasures and do many things to obtain them If we do not find the pleasures we seek or if we get them for a time and lose them, we produce in ourselves anger, hatred and grief This intensifies our original ignorance Egoism, the feeling of "I," the possessive feelings of 'mine,' the acquisitive urge of 'for me' and the passions that arise out of this steadily grow in intensity We are thus thrown farther and farther away from the truth Desisting from this course and positively and definitely striving to get nearer and nearer to the truth is the path of liberation Purity and humility are essential We should cultivate the conviction of mind that the Supreme Soul is within us and all around us and earnestly bend our minds to contemplation of the oneness of all life It is about this oneness of the Universal that Bharati, the national poet of the South, sang

"The crow and the sparrow are my kin,
The wide seas and the hills are my community.
Whatever I see, wherever my vision turns,
It is my own flesh and blood, myself!
Oh, this boundless ecstasy!"

Though the perfect light is not attained, effort should not be relaxed Even if the truth is partially realized, it will do us great good The very effort will largely purge us of our faults and help us towards right conduct and to escape from many sinful deeds The mental effort to realize the universal identity will itself raise us to a higher plane.

Chapter X

THE LAW OF KARMA

The body is a tool, a fine tool, a magic tool with which its master, the soul, strangely becomes one and inseparable In the same way, the soul too is a tool for God who resides within the soul and uses it for what purpose or why we cannot unravel or say It is a mystic relationship in which the tool and he who wields it are merged in inextricable fashion The body and the subtle senses within it should not be disloyal to their master, the soul, but serve as good tools. Even so, the individual should be a good and loyal tool for the Lord who dwells within and should dedicate every act, thought and word to Him

Acts are done through body, speech and mind Every act has its appointed effect The law of cause and effect is unalterable The effect lies inherent in the cause, like the tree in its seed. Water dries up when exposed to the sun This cannot be altered When the heat and the water meet, the effect is there This is the case with everything The cause holds the effect in its womb If we reflect deeply, the entire world in all aspects will be found to revolve in accordance with unalterable laws This is the doctrine of *Karma* taught in the Vedanta It is wrong to think of Karma in terms of fatalism Destiny as taught in Vedanta does not involve a surrender of effort or a breakdown of faith in natural laws *Karma* is the unalterable law of effect following previous causes This is what distinguishes

Vedanta from fatalism as it emerged in the West from the pagan philosophies

When a Hindu speaks of the decree of fate, it means that one should expect only the fruit of one's action No act can ever go for nothing, failing to produce its result Again an act can produce only *its true result* Nothing else can happen It is not possible to do a thing and escape its result, or expect something, to produce which something else should have been done Given the necessary acts, the appropriate results must follow. The law of *Karma* thus constitutes true freedom of action

With mind, speech and body we perform acts The thoughts which we think, the words spoken and acts done; all produce their fruits. The consequence cannot be escaped

When a Vedantin says that everything happens according to *Karma,* it does not mean that knowledge and human effort are vain and that human activity does not count "Yes, I agree it is decreed It is the decree of law that there is no happiness for the ignorant It is the decree of law that if the laws of health are neglected, diseases must be endured" said Bharati, explaining how the law of *Karmo* is not fatalism Industry and character will have their reward, and the law of *Karma* is the charter that guarantees this

When we do not know the causes which produced an event but which all the same assuredly exist, we call the result Destiny, decree of Fate, or chance But this nomenclature means nothing but the lamenting of results and the confession of a failure to use our intelligence to find out the causes The Sanskrit word *Adrishta* commonly used as an equivalent for Fate means literally

the next life This, the most important doctrine in Hindu religion, is the application in the moral sphere of the law of conservation of energy Indeed, both may be looked upon as parts of one law *Karma* is the law of conservation in the Spiritual world Cause and effect must be equivalent As death is only disintegration of the body and not of the soul, the law of cause and effect, so far as the soul is concerned, continues to operate beyond death The death of the body does not operate as a bankruptcy-discharge The old account is carried over

The tiniest pebble thrown into water produces a ripple The disturbance is carried onwards in ever-widening circles on the water Likewise also do all our acts and thoughts produce results The most transient and secret thought entertained in the mind ruffles the Universal Calm and the disturbance has to be worked off

Whether a man frees himself from the fruits of his past deeds that hold him in their grip from birth, or adds some more links to the chain that binds him depends upon the way he lives But the soul has the freedom and the power to overcome natural tendencies and to strive for liberation

"Victory is certain, O mind!
Away with false fear
Devotion will bear its certain fruit
Shoulders we have,
Broad and strong for any work,
Intelligence to produce,
And gather what we rightly desire.

Chapter XI

THE LIFE OF THE VEDANTIN

THE Gita expands and explains the ethics of Vedanta It emphasizes that the activities of the world must go on We should so act that thereby the world must improve in the coming generations. Like good people who plant trees for their children and children's children, we should work to improve humanity by improving ourselves for future births even though there may be no continuity of memory and identity of personality. Otherwise, the world cannot become better and better, as we should all strive to make it. The good man should do the tasks to which he is called and which appertain to his place in society. In all his activities he does things like others, outwardly, but inwardly he maintains a spirit of detachment He does everything without selfish motive He maintains equilibrium of mind in success and failure, in pleasure and pain, in joy and sorrow Purified thus, the good man is qualified for further progress by meditation and prayer *Yoga* consists in thus living a dedicated life in the midst of wordly affairs Work should be done in a spirit of duty done, and results should not be permitted to agitate the mind This unselfish and detached attitude can and should be cultivated even while we are busily engaged in life's activities Continual practice of this attitude is the essence of the Vedantic life

Isavasya Upanishad begins thus.

"Everything in the Universe abides in the Supreme Being Realizing this, dedicate everything you do to that Being Cast off the desires that arise in the heart, the thought of possessing what is enjoyed by another Joy comes by such renunciation of desire Do your duties and go through the allotted span of life In detachment and dedication lies the way for man to keep his soul uncontaminated, not otherwise"

The teaching of the Gita may be summarized as follows:

The Vedantin always bears in mind that within him and in every object in the world dwells the Supreme Soul He will not give room in his mind to feelings of lust or anger or desire

He performs fully, carefully and conscientiously but without attachment, all duties devolving upon him as a result of birth or of events and circumstances, or arising out of the place he occupies in society There is in truth no superiority or inferiority in the various duties allotted to individuals or groups in any social order, all being equally necessary of performance for the maintenance and welfare of society They should all be performed in the spirit of unselfish co-operation, which ennobles and equalizes all tasks

Controlling his senses, he leads a pure life, regulating his work, food, rest, recreation and sleep.

He does not lose heart in the face of difficulties, and whether sorrow or happiness falls to his lot, he maintains his courage and equanimity

Let no one be dazed by the thought that this schedule of conduct is of no use to ordinary men who are not saints or sages

"Even a little effort in this direction will yield good fruit. There is no waste in this. It is not like the rule of medicine which says that if one fails in following the prescribed diet, the medicine may not only do no good but may do harm. There is no danger arising out of defects and imperfections. Even if this teaching is practised to a small extent, it will do great good."*

The question may be asked, how can it produce any enthusiasm to be told that something will be fruitful in a future birth? We shall be born in the next birth without any memories of the past. We do not now remember anything of our past lives, nor will the memories of this life follow us in the next birth. Therefore, what does it matter whether we do good or evil? Let us seek the pleasures of the present moment. If I am born again, I shall then be a different man remembering nothing of the present. What is the relation between him and me? How can we be one without continuity of memories? Why should I labour for him? With death the memories of this life end. Thus may the seeker of pleasure object to the teaching of Vedanta about right conduct and self-control for the sake of a future birth.

But there is a hunger in the soul that self-seeking and momentary pleasures cannot satisfy. The joy of right conduct is inherent in human nature. This stands confirmed by the inner feeling of every one of us, and by experience as well as all history, recorded and unrecorded. Members of a family work for the good of the family and of the village. We see ordinary men suffering privations for the sake of others whom they have never seen, mere-

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* Gita II 40

ly because they belong to their place. People do not sit with folded hands indifferent to the good of their village or town. We see that men sacrifice their self-interest and suffer for the good of the State and for the safety of their country. We do not know who will enjoy the shade of the trees on the road-side but we plant them so that men of a future generation may enjoy their shade We take pleasure in all such work We should widen this broad-mindedness to a further degree and think of the good of the whole world and its future happiness

According to the law of cause and effect with its extension over future births, if we live the Vedantic life, the growth of evils will be stopped, and the souls that will inhabit the future world will progressively rise to a higher stage The object of right living is therefore twofold—one's own happiness and one's contribution to a better world irrespective of the disconnection in memory. The appeal of Vadanta is based on responsibility for the future world Social and civic co-operation permanently benefit the town or village wherein one is a citizen Patriotism benefits the future generations of the country to which we belong Vedanta seeks the welfare of the future world of which we are all the present builders If we live detached and dedicated lives, the world will be peopled by better men as time goes on It is only the incorrigibly selfish that should ask for memory of personality in re-birth as a motive for right living

Chapter XII
CONCLUSION

This is Vedanta In places it may seem as if we strayed into pure mysticism irrelevant to social conscience But the roots of conscience must pierce deep and grip life so that our innermost thoughts may be so shaped as to produce automatic right conduct Right conduct cannot hang in the air The lure of ultimate truth leads earnest men to mysticism Those who have drunk deep of the awe and beauty of the Universe that Science has progressively been revealing cannot find satisfaction in crude anthropomorphism. The mysticism involved in Vedanta relates the good life to Truth and Science, and replaces conflict by harmony and integrated thought.

TEXTS

TEXTS

All this world is pervaded by Me in form unmanifest; all beings abide in Me, but I stand apart from them

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥

And yet beings are not rooted in Me Behold the scheme of My sovereignty! Myself the origin and the support of beings, yet standing apart from them

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।
भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः ॥

Using Nature, which is Mine own, I create again and again all this multitude of beings, keeping them dependent on Nature

प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः ।
भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात् ॥

In the scheme of My sovereignty Nature brings forth the moving and the unmoving and keeps the world going

मयाऽध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः सूयते सचराचरम् ।
हेतुनाऽनेन कौन्तेय जगद्विपरिवर्तते ॥

Bhagavad Gita Ch IX

The Good is one thing, the Pleasant is another. These two lead to very different ends. The wise are not deceived by the attractions of the Pleasant They choose the Good Fools are snared into the mere Pleasant and perish

अन्यच्छ्रेयोऽन्यदुतैव प्रेयस्ते
उभे नानार्थे पुरुष सिनीतः ।
तयोः श्रेय आददानस्य साधु
भवति हीयतेऽर्थाद्य उ प्रेयो वृणीते ॥
श्रेयश्च प्रेयश्च मनुष्यमेतस्तौ
सपरीत्य विविनक्ति धीरः ।
श्रेयो हि धीरोऽभिप्रेयसो वृणीते
प्रेयो मन्दो योगक्षेमाद् वृणीते ॥

Kathopanishad

Self-realization is the way to liberation. Concentrating the mind on the Spirit within, man should realize the divine character of his own soul and its intrinsic freedom The Supreme Spirit is lodged within oneself, unperceived because of the perplexities of joy and grief and attachment to worldly objects.

तं दुर्दर्शं गूढमनुप्रविष्टं
गुहाहित गह्वरेष्ठं पुराणम् ।
अध्यात्मयोगाधिगमेन देव
मत्वा धीरो हर्षशोकौ जहाति ॥

Kathopanishad

This realization can come only if from inside one's own heart spring purity of resolve and earnestness of spirit It does not come by much study or by learned discussions It comes to one whose Self yearns for realization, and whose mind has turned away from evil and has learnt to subdue itself and is at peace with the world

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो
न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्य-
स्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनू स्वाम् ॥

Kathopanishad

The openings of the mind, viz., the sense organs, are directed outwards Therefore do men's thoughts ever tend outwards But the few who have true understanding turn their mind inwards and realize the Self within Those without understanding pursue external pleasures and fall into the widespread net of Birth and Death Those of steady mind do not spend their thoughts on transient pleasures They seek the joy of liberation

पराञ्चि खानि व्यतृणत्स्वयम्भूः
तस्मात् पराङ् पश्यति नान्तरात्मन् ।
कश्चिद्धीरः प्रत्यगात्मानमैक्षत्
आवृत्तचक्षुरमृतत्वमिच्छन् ॥
पराचः कामाननुयन्ति बालास्ते
मृत्योर्यन्ति विततस्य पाशम् ।
अथ धीरा अमृतत्वं विदित्वा
ध्रुवमध्रुवेष्विह न प्रार्थयन्ते ॥

Kathopanishad

The rain falling on the rocks divides itself and flows down the hill-sides in many torrents So does the ignorant man see manifoldness and is confused like the waters falling on the rocks Water poured into water becomes one and the same with it Thus it is with the Self of the man of understanding who sees unity in manifoldness

यथोदकं दुर्गे वृष्टं पर्वतेषु विधावति ।
एवं धर्मान्पृथक् पश्यंस्तानेवानुविधावति ॥
यथोदकं शुद्धे शुद्धमासिक्तं तादृगेव भवति ।
एवं मुनेर्विजानत आत्मा भवति गौतम ॥

Kathopanishad

The Soul is contained in the body as the fire is contained unmanifest in the wood Fire takes shape in accordance with the thing burning It is now the flame of a lamp, now a furnace, and now a forest-fire, according as to where it is manifested The fire by itself is one and the same So also is the Soul one, though manifold in embodiment What is here is there and what is there is here, i e., things and beings seem various but are, indeed, one Being We are liberated when we perceive this oneness We go from death to death if we perceive difference It is by enlightenment that the mind can overcome the perception of difference and have a vision of the transcendent oneness

अग्निर्यथैको भुवनं प्रविष्टो रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव ।
एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बहिश्च ॥
यदेवेह तदमुत्र यदमुत्र तदन्विह ।
मृत्योः स मृत्युमाप्नोति य इह नानेव पश्यति ॥
मनसैवेदमाप्तव्यं नेह नानास्ति किंचन ।
मृत्योः स मृत्युं गच्छति य इह नानेव पश्यति ॥

Kathopanishad

Everything in the universe abides in the Supreme Being Realize this well, and realizing it cast off the thought of possessing what is enjoyed by another Joy comes only by the giving up of desires and attachments Go through the allotted years of your life, doing work in a detached spirit and dedicating everything to God Thus only can we escape the contamination of **Karma.**

ईशावास्यमिद सर्वं यत्किच जगत्या जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृध कस्यस्विद्धनम् ।।
कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छत समाः ।
एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ।।

Isavasyopanishad

He who thinks he knows really thereby proves himself ignorant He who realizes that he does not know Him has best understood Him. Those who seek to understand Him, as they understand things of ordinary knowledge, can never achieve their object Those who realize the limitation of the human mind in respect of the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit and therefore frankly confess ignorance, are really nearer to a true understanding of it

यदि मन्यसे सुवेदेति दभ्रमेवापि
नून त्वं वेत्थ ब्रह्मणो रूप ।
यदस्य त्वं यदस्य च देवेष्वथ नु
मीमास्यमेव ते मन्ये विदितम् ॥
यस्यामत तस्य मत
मत यस्य न वेद स. ।
अविज्ञातं विजानता
विज्ञातमविजानताम् ॥

Kenopanishad

Let man realize the divinity of his soul Thereby does he obtain Release The Lord upholds the universe which is built on a union of the manifest and the unmanifest, the imperishable and the perishable Functioning as Enjoyer through the senses, the soul in man loses the consciousness of lordship and is enchained When he realizes lordship, he is freed from every tie.

सयुक्तमेतत्क्षरमक्षर च
व्यक्ताव्यक्त भरते विश्वमीशः ।
अनीशश्चात्मा वध्यते भोक्तृभावा-
ज्ज्ञात्वा देव मुच्यते सर्वपाशैः ॥

Svetasvataropanishad

Iswara rules over the Soul as well as over material nature which forms the field for the Soul's functioning. By contemplation and repeated meditation, realization is attained of the unity of these three, God, Matter and Soul. Man then reaches liberation from all the illusions of the world.

क्षरं प्रधानममृताक्षर हरः
क्षरात्मानावीशते देव एकः ।
तस्याभिध्यानाद्योजनात्तत्वभावाद्
भूयश्चान्ते विश्वमायानिवृत्तिः ॥

Svetasvataropanishad

The fire is not seen in its manifest shape when it is concealed in its birthplace, the wood. But it appears to view when we bring it out. So does meditation bring out the Supreme Spirit from within us wherein He has concealed Himself. Like oil in the sesame seed, like ghee concealed in milk, like water concealed in the river-bed, like fire concealed in the fire-churner, is the Supreme Spirit within us, though not manifest. When the two pieces of wood in the fire-churner are rubbed, the fire manifests itself. The butter is separated from milk if we make it into curds and churn it. The water is seen if we sink a pit in the sand

of the river-bed The Divine Self, that is hidden within oneself, will similarly be made manifest through Truth and meditation and control of mind and senses, which is penance. Let him make his body the lower piece and knowledge the upper piece of the **Arani**, and by the practice of meditation, churn the fire out, so to say

वह्नेर्यथा योनिगतस्य मूर्तिर्न
दृश्यते नैव च लिङ्गनाशः ।
स भूय एवेन्धनयोनिगृह्य-
स्तद्वोभय वै प्रणवेन देहे ॥
स्वदेहमरणि कृत्वा
प्रणव चोत्तरारणिम् ।
ध्याननिर्मथनाभ्यासात्
देव पश्येन्निगूढवत् ॥
तिलेषु तैल दधनीव सर्पिराप·
स्रोतस्स्वरणीषु चाग्निः ।
एवमात्मनि गृह्यतेऽसौ
सत्येनैन तपसा योऽनुपश्यति ॥

Svetasvataropanishad

This Isa, dwelling in the heart of man, can be perceived not by the eye but by the heart; and he attains immortality who thus perceives Him

न सदृशे तिष्ठति रूपमस्य
न चक्षुषा पश्यति कश्चनैनम् ।
हृदा हृदिस्थ मनसा य
एनमेव विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥

Svetasvataropanishad

Not time or innate quality of matter is the true cause of phenomena, as some learned men imagine, but the glory of God who dwells in and revolves all things, animate and inanimate. The Universal Spirit is indivisible, untainted, tranquil Not discovering it in oneself, it is impossible to find an end for the misery of life It would be easier to roll up the sky and carry it on one's head like a tanner carrying his hide, than to achieve happiness without understanding and realizing the immanence of God

स्वभावमेको कवयो वदन्ति
काल तथान्ये परिमुह्यमाना. ।
देवस्यैष महिमा तु लोके
येनेदं भ्राम्यते ब्रह्मचक्रम् ॥

एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः
सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ।

निष्कलं निष्क्रिय शान्त
निरवद्य निरञ्जनम् ॥

यदा चर्मवदाकाश
वेष्टयिष्यन्ति मानवा ।
तदा देवमविज्ञाय
दु खस्यान्तो भविष्यति ॥

Svetasvataropanishad

The direct teaching of a father or a **Guru** is essential Without this, book knowledge would be of not much avail But more than all, it is important to remember that spiritual teaching can avail nothing without the previous purging of character necessary for the knowledge and realization of the highest truth

वेदान्ते परम गुह्यं
पुराकल्पे प्रचोदितम् ।
नाप्रशान्ताय दातव्य
नापुत्रायाशिष्याय वा पुन. ॥

Svetasvataropanishad

अतः समुद्रा गिरयश्च सर्वेऽस्मात्स्यन्दन्ते सिंधवः सर्वरूपा.। अतश्च सर्वा ओपधयो रसाश्च येनैप भूतैस्तिष्ठते ह्यन्तरात्मा ॥ एतद्यो वेद निहितं गुहायां सोऽविद्याग्रन्थि विकिरतीह सोम्य ॥

Mundakopanishad

He ıs the whole Unıverse Heaven, Earth and Sky, your mınd and your lıfe-breath are all woven ınto Hım Know that He is the one and only Exıstence Thıs knowledge ıs the brıdge to ımmortalıty All other learnıng ıs mere words to be escaped from

यस्मिन्द्यौः पृथिवी चान्तरिक्षमोतं मनः सह प्राणैश्च सर्वें । तमेवैक जानथ आत्मानमन्या वाचो विमुचथामृतस्यैष सेतु. ॥

Mundakopanishad

God is wıthın your own heart He has lodged Hımself in your food-sustaıned body and rules ıt and its lıfe, even He that sustaıns the whole unıverse and all ıts glory

यः सर्वज्ञ. सर्वविद्यैस्यैष महिमा भुवि । दिव्ये व्रह्मपुरे ह्येप व्योम्न्यात्मा संप्रतिष्ठित ॥ मनोमयः प्राण-शरीरनेता प्रतिष्ठितोऽन्ने हृदय सनिधाय । तद्विज्ञानेन परिपश्यन्ति धीरा आनन्दरूपममृतं यद्विभाति ॥

Mundakopanishad

When His presence in our own selves is realized, all doubts, all attachments and all activities vanish. His presence should be realized in every aspect of existence.

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ॥
क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे ॥

Mundakopanishad

On realizing Him, what is individual life? What even is the sun and the moon, the stars and the lightning of the clouds? All these are but reflections of that One Light. He fills all the quarters. He alone exists.

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो
भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः । तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वम्
तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥ ब्रह्मैवेदममृतं
पुरस्ताद् ब्रह्म पश्चाद् ब्रह्म दक्षिणतश्चोत्तरेण । अध-
श्चोर्ध्वञ्च प्रसृतं ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वमिदं वरिष्ठम् ॥

Mundakopanishad

Mere learning does not reveal Him. One must realize that the Lord is the life that lives and the light that shines in everything. When he realizes this, he loses his dependence on externals and finds all bliss in himself.

प्राणो ह्येष यः सर्वभूतैर्विभाति विजानन्वि-
द्वान्भवते नातिवादी । आत्मक्रीड आत्मरतिः क्रिया-
वानेष ब्रह्मविदा वरिष्ठः ॥

Mundakopanishad

Truth, penance, true understanding and purity of life are essential requisites for the revelation When **Brahman** is revealed, He shines like a burning light within oneself

सत्येन लभ्यस्तपसा ह्येष आत्मा सम्यग्ज्ञानेन
ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यम् । अंत.शरीरे ज्योतिर्मयो हि
शुभ्रो यं पश्यन्ति यतय क्षीणदोषाः ॥

Mundakopanishad

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PREFACE

Swami Shivananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, was the second President (1922-1933) of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission When he took up the task of that onerous office, he had not only to direct the various activities of the Mission, but also to solve the spiritual problems of innumerable disciples and devotees—young and old, lay and monastic Wherever he might be, after meditation hours in the morning he would receive the members of the monastery who would gather to his room one by one At that time he would talk informally about many things according to his own mood and also according to the nature of the inquiries of those who went to him The topics of conversation varied from the domestic problems of the monastery to high philosophical and spiritual subjects Sometimes on such occasions, when in a high mood, he would say things which remained indelibly impressed upon the minds of the listeners and afterwards became the sheet anchor of their spiritual lives. But there was no fixed time when he would talk on spiritual problems At all hours of the day and far into the night anybody could approach him, in private or in company if he was not otherwise busy, and ask questions pertaining to the inner life Usually in the afternoon or evening on Sundays and holidays many devotees would sit round him and discuss with him many things The Swami was never formal, he could make his hearers feel at ease, and that would embolden them very freely to broach any question they liked. Those who had the privilege of sitting at his feet—they very often squatted on the floor like happy children—on such occasions remember how elevated they felt during those periods Perhaps the problems that were exercising their minds for years together would be solved

in a moment—sometimes without their having definitely asked them, in answers to questions put by others Perhaps someone had come stricken with grief at some mishap or bereavement, he would feel lightened of his burden Some one would get inspiration the effect of which was to last many years, if not throughout his whole life When all visitors had gone away, and he was alone, he would sometimes be so absorbed in deep thoughts that one dared not approach and disturb him Some one might have a pressing problem which could only be asked in private With halting steps he approached the Swami, who would immediately receive him with so much affection that half his trouble was over instantaneously And when the question was put, the answer would touch the very depth of his heart and clear all doubts Such was the experience of many who had the opportunity of coming into contact with the Swami

Many put down in writing for their future guidance and help the reports of their conversations with him Swami Apurvananda, who had the privilege of being the attendant of Swami Shivananda for a long time, collected these reports in Bengali in book form for the benefit of the general public Here in the following pages is given the English translation of that book Much is naturally lost in translation, and it is not possible for a reader to put himself in the setting in which the conversations were held and which enhanced the value of the utterances But still we hope some at least among the readers will derive some benefit from these English reports, which is our reason for this publication

Most of those who would go to the Swami were persons who sought to realize God in their lives, and the main trend of their conversations was in respect to that Therefore we thought it appropriate to name the book "For Seekers of God"

this volume) to the original Bengali book, was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission from March, 1937 till his passing away in April, 1938

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FOREWORD

Mahapurush Swami Shivananda was one of Sri Ramakrishna's blessed direct disciples who dedicated their lives at the feet of the Master and served as his principal aides in carrying out his Divine mission I came to know the Swami intimately first at Dakshineswar and later in other places It was in Sri Ramakrishna's room at Dakshineswar that I first met him, sometime in 1884, fifty-two or fifty-three years ago Tall and slim, he impressed me as being fearless The Master said to him. "Look here, many people, young and old, come to this place I seldom ask them anything about their home and family connections But I feel like making an exception in your case Tell me where you come from and what your father's name is" In reply, Mahapurush told the Master about his father and family After hearing him Sri Ramakrishna rejoined "Oh, I see, you are the son of Ram Kanai I know your father very well He is a highly developed soul You will certainly make progress along spiritual lines" That day the conversation touched on several other topics as well

After this incident, owing to a strange combination of circumstances, I did not see Swami Shivananda for a period of serveral years Later, in 1897, about forty-one years ago, when I was serving as an engineer, I happened to meet him again On my way from Bankipore to my place of employment, as I was walking up and down the platform of the Buxar railway station, from a distance I saw a Sadhu, intelligent and energetic, who, I thought, might be a monk of the Ramakrishna Order Coming near I discovered that it was Swami Shivananda I greeted him He recognized me and said that he was on his way to Benares where he would be stopping at Bamshi Dutt's place He asked me to meet him